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The Shape of Things

POLITICIANS WITH SHORT-RANGE MINDS are naturally divided on the proposed constitutional change in our method of electing Presidents. Southern Democrats, for all their harping on states' rights, are delighted with the prospect of scrapping the present unit rule, under which the candidate receiving a plurality in any given state receives that state's total electoral vote. In the move to make each state's electoral ballot proportional to the popular vote they see an end to the power of a political minority or a racial minority to make itself a balance of power in populous Northern states and thus exact concessions from the Democratic Party, in which category they place the President's civil-rights program. On the other hand, some Republicans gleefully regard the amendment, which was passed by the Senate last week, as the death knell of the one-party system in the South. But Senator Taft is worried because he thinks the Republicans stand to lose more by dividing the electoral vote of, say, Ohio, which they normally carry by a narrow margin, than they can gain by sharing the electoral vote of South Carolina, where their popular vote is traditionally insignificant. Other conservatives, Democratic and Republican alike, fear that radical groups, unable to exert a balance of power within the major parties, will get together and garner an ever-increasing share of the electoral vote on a proportional basis. All these speculations, we believe, are the petty considerations of petty men. In principle, the effort to scrap the archaic Electoral College is long overdue. A move that would make a Democratic vote count in Vermont and a Republican vote count in Georgia is a move in the direction of greater democracy, let the political chips fall where they may.

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THE CAUSE OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE HAS been supported by this magazine for over thirty years and its editors are therefore particularly happy to be able to congratulate India on becoming "a sovereign democratic republic." We congratulate also the people of Britain, who under the leadership of the Labor Party have proved that imperialism can be peacefully liquidated. By withdrawing voluntarily from India three years ago the British government made possible a free association between the two countries that may have great significance in the next half century. Now that independence has been won, Indians are realizing that if they suffered much from their former rulers they also learned much. In constructing their constitution they have blended Western ideas with indigenous conceptions of democracy. Following Britain, they have established an executive directly responsible to the legislature and have guarded against the rigidities of a written constitution by providing for its amendment by simple act of Parliament. From this country they have borrowed certain federalist ideas, and American ancestry may perhaps be claimed for a declaration of human rights more detailed than that imbedded in the constitution of any other nation. "The objective of our republic," said India's first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in his acceptance speech, "is to secure justice, liberty, and equality to its citizens and to promote fraternity among the peoples who inhabit its vast territories and follow different religions, speak various languages, and observe their peculiar customs." This high aim will not be easily achieved. There are many dragons in the path—such monsters as poverty, bigotry, and ignorance—and Indian leaders will need all the courage, patience, and wisdom they can muster. But friends of democracy everywhere will wish them well and hope to see the new republic become the light of Asia.

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A LETTER SAID TO BE WRITTEN BY THE British Colonial Secretary to the East African government, a copy of which has fallen into the hands of the National Petroleum Council, has stirred up one of the nastiest Anglo-American rows in some time. (How this confidential document was procured is a mystery. Does the American oil industry, truly an *imperium in imperio*, maintain its own cloak-and-dagger outfit in foreign lands?) The letter—to assume its authenticity, which Whitehall has neither confirmed or denied—requests the East African government to arrange for substitution of so-called "sterling" fuel oil for that now obtained from American-controlled sources. Similar action has already been taken by Britain itself, and all countries in the sterling area are being asked to follow suit. The purpose is of course to cut down the sterling area's dollar deficit, a large part of which is attributable to

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payments for oil. Referring to American criticisms of this policy, the Colonial Secretary wrote: "The Americans as expected have not gone beyond expressing regret. . . ." Consequently the State Department has been assailed by the Petroleum Council for failing to protect American interests, and Secretary Acheson has been constrained to issue a rebuke to the British government.

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IF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS, IN FACT, been formal rather than forcible in its representations to London, the reason may be its appreciation of the many ironies of the situation. We have been pressing Britain to reduce its dependence on dollar imports and to help it do so have, through E. C. A., made available equipment for the expansion of its Middle Eastern oil resources. Yet now that these resources are beginning to yield enough to supply their needs, we accuse the British of ungratefully using our aid to the detriment of American interests. It would be equally logical for American farmers to protest against recent reductions in British food purchases here because some E. C. A. funds have helped to finance the expansion of British agricultural production. The fact is, cuts in British imports are bound to hurt some American private interests, but Britain cannot spend dollars it hasn't got unless we supply more gratis. Another ironical aspect of the present trouble is that while the whole American oil industry is denouncing British attempts to curtail the business of American companies, a section of it, with strong political support, is clamoring for sharp restrictions on imports of oil to this country, including that produced abroad by American concerns. Apparently it is all right for us to raise the bars, even though we have a large surplus in our balance of payments, but all wrong for other countries to do so, even though they are struggling to reduce trade deficits.

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WHILE FRANCO IS AGAIN THREATENING TO turn to Stalin if the United States does not provide dollars to keep the Falangist state going, a new kind of Franquist propaganda is flourishing in Latin America. This time the Franco agents are not Jesuits or politicians but poets. A *Nation* reader from Venezuela has sent us the details of the reception given in Caracas to four troubadours—Luis Rosales, Leopoldo Panero, Agustin de Foxa, and Antonio Zubiarre—recently dispatched by the Spanish dictator to sing the beauties of fascist Spain. Driven out of Caracas under a bombardment of rotten eggs and tomatoes, they were similarly rejected by all the other Latin American countries. Everywhere they were greeted with the cry: "Whom are you for—Lorca [the great poet murdered by the Falange at the outbreak of the Spanish war] or Franco?" But our Venezuelan

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friend points out that this rather absurd poetical invasion has distracted attention from other more dangerous emissaries. He reports the arrival in the Venezuelan capital of several prominent leaders of the Falangist youth. The real object of their mission is still unknown, but they seem to be involved in the activities of "Copel," a Catholic party directed by young middle-class Venezuelans. From other reports coming to us from Latin America we learn that the change in American policy on Spain has aroused strong feeling. A great meeting of Spanish Republicans and Mexicans, including many anti-Communist left leaders, to protest against the Acheson reversal is planned for next week in Mexico City.

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SINCE WE LAST REPORTED ON THE PLIGHT of Hamportzoon Choolokian [The Shoemaker's Children by Samuel M. Blinken, *The Nation*, May 14, 1949], two higher courts have sustained Justice Lumbard of the New York Supreme Court in refusing to allow the former immigrant's three youngest children to be withdrawn from the Roman Catholic institutions in which they now live and join him in his native Armenia. It will be recalled that the children, who except for one small baby had been raised in their father's Armenian Apostolic Orthodox religion, had been turned over to the Catholic homes by him some years ago when he ran into hard times and could find no available Protestant welfare facilities. In 1947, when he decided to return to Armenia—which had become a part of the Soviet Union during his stay in this country—the Catholic institutions refused to release three of his six children, and he was forced to sail without them. As Choolokian's attorney, Mr. Blinken recently filed a petition and brief for a writ of certiorari before the Supreme Court of the United States. The "parties respondent" to the proceedings—Raymond M. Hilliard, New York City's Welfare Commissioner, the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, and the New York Foundling Hospital—have about a month in which to file a reply. We hope the Supreme Court will elect to review this vitally important case involving the right of a parent to rear and educate his children according to his own inclinations—and even to take them to Russia if he chooses to live there himself.

*

PROTESTS ARE PILING UP AGAINST THE exclusion from Japan of Andrew Roth, our Far Eastern correspondent, barred by General MacArthur after he had been accredited as a correspondent and cleared for entry to MacArthurland by the Department of Defense. The New York *Post's* sharp criticism of several weeks back, previously mentioned in these columns, has been reprinted in the St. Louis *Star-Times*, and an even blunter statement in the Des Moines *Register* has been reprinted in half a dozen smaller Middle Western newspapers. Equally important, the American Newspaper Guild and two of its largest locals have taken a strong interest in the case. It is on the agenda for discussion at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Guild's International Executive Board, and as we go to press the executive board of the New York City local is voting upon the unanimous recommendation of a subcommittee that it demand a public investigation of the mysterious ruling. *Frontpage*, the local Guild newspaper, has carried the Roth story to the city's 7,000 working newspapermen. Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, the local president has urged President Truman and Secretary Johnson by telegram to reverse MacArthur's "arbitrary" decision.

Surrender on Spain

HOWEVER tragic the capitulation of Secretary of State Acheson to the friends of Francisco Franco and the surplus-cotton South, the surrender of a wide sector of the anti-Franco forces in Washington has been more so. In Congress, filled as it is with men who have bitterly opposed Franco in the past—and who still privately oppose him—only a few voices have been raised. Adolph J. Sabath (Dem., Ill.) read into the record a condemnation of the new State Department policy which had appeared in the Chicago *Sun-Times*. Jacob K. Javits (Rep., N. Y.) told the press that he was opposed "altogether" to the new policy. Americans for Democratic Action emphasized the moral catastrophe of this policy.

The State Department, after the Secretary's letter had been made public, sat back and waited for the outcry from liberals which it believed would greet its change of line. Presently it heaved a sigh of relief. Not one of a dozen Senators and Representatives who in the past had led the fight against Franco spoke up. "Nobody wants to stick his neck out," said an extremely well-informed Congressman.

Why is this? Part of the reluctance stems from the never-ending fight of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in favor of Franco. Congressmen see no point in antagonizing Catholic voters unless there is a possibility of "accomplishing something." Part of it, among the Democrats, is due to their unwillingness to criticize the Administration in an election year. But the overwhelming reason lies in the tragic fact that the anti-Franco forces are now divided and uncertain as they have never been before. They were caught napping by the Acheson letter, although, as this journal warned last October, Franco's strength in the capital has been steadily growing. In recent months one of the cleverest and most powerful lobbies in Washington has been working night

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and day to reverse American Spanish policy. Ultimately it will get its way unless the anti-Franco forces in the United States begin to fight with much more vigor. This lobby is headed by José Felix de Lequerica, inspector of embassies in the Spanish foreign service, who came to the United States in the spring of 1948 to "inspect" the embassy in Washington but has remained to carry on propaganda for Franco, a task made relatively easy by the cold war with Russia. Although he carries the title of ambassador he has presented no credentials to the State Department. Nor is he registered as a foreign agent.

The Lequerica thesis has been (1) that Spain represents an ideal ally in the war against communism, and (2) that Spain today is a salesman's paradise for Americans with surpluses to export. The first argument has swung into line those Congressmen who see war with Russia as inevitable. The second has converted many Southerners, normally impervious to the pleas of the Catholic hierarchy in behalf of Franco but unable to resist the lure of the cotton and tobacco market that loans to Franco would open. With American private bankers unwilling to risk their money on the Franco regime, except in the case of the fantastic gold-exchange loan of the Chase Bank, it has become axiomatic that American taxpayers' dollars would be used instead.

Sources close to the State Department have a hundred explanations for Acheson's change of position. They say that this is an election year and that the Administration wanted to get Franco supporters "off its neck"; that the Franco issue will not be permitted to come before the United Nations General Assembly until next September; that Acheson, harried by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his China policy, had to throw it the sop of a friendly gesture toward Franco—in brief, the Spanish Republic was once more sacrificed in the war against communism.

Despite these explanations, all of which are accompanied by assurances that neither the State Department nor the Export-Import Bank will make further concessions to Franco, it is clear that the door has been opened and can probably be opened wider in the future. The unremitting pressure of the pro-Franco forces is likely to push the Administration into granting economic aid and loans unless strong liberal opposition can be rallied. The push has already started with Senator Taft's "concern" lest the Administration "do nothing" for the next ten months. The $50,000,000 aid-to-Franco E. C. A. amendment, passed by the House, was defeated in the Senate last year only as a result of strenuous intervention by the State Department. There is no guaranty that the Administration will put up an equally vigorous fight this year or that, even if it does, it will be successful. Only if American liberals wake up, and wake up promptly, will Franco be defeated.

Some Other Choices

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

IN HIS impressive speech proposing a five-year, fifty-billion-dollar plan to foster democracy and peace, Senator Brien McMahon approved without qualification the President's decision to push ahead the development of hydrogen explosives. "He had no other choice," said the Senator from Connecticut. "American renunciation of the hydrogen bomb would mean the folly of 'disarmament by example.'" As chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, Mr. McMahon carries great weight, yet many people would challenge his premise.

The alternative to the President's fateful decision was not necessarily "renunciation" of the new weapon. Mr. Truman could have said that we were ready and able to build hydrogen bombs, but before doing so would make one last effort through the United Nations to reach a compromise agreement on atomic control and other outstanding differences with Russia. Such a statement would at least have indicated that this country has not abandoned all idea of ending the competitive scramble toward war and general suicide. What Mr. Truman actually said sounded like a door slammed shut in the face of hope. He was dry and business-like. He gave no sign of willingness to retreat an inch from the rigid stand the government had taken on atomic control; he brushed aside the suggestion of new talks with Russia. And so when McMahon stood up in the Senate and called for a Marshall Plan–Point Four program for the world in exchange for the abolition of atomic weapons and the reduction of ordinary armaments, his words echoed somewhat hollowly, on a stage already set for new triumphs of destructive power.

The Senator's proposal was further weakened by his assumption that atomic disarmament must be accomplished strictly within the terms of the Baruch plan for international control. This position is also maintained by Mr. Truman. But it wilfully ignores the implications of the President's other momentous announcement last September—that Russia had successfully produced an atomic explosion. If the United States had then been willing to consider modifications in the American plan, some realistic compromise might perhaps have been reached. For it was generally believed in the U. N. as in Europe that Russia, having conquered the secret of atomic power, was prepared to be conciliatory. The smaller states, together with President of the Assembly Carlos Romulo and the U. N. secretariat, insisted desperately that a compromise solution must be sought.

But nothing happened. The Western majority firmly shut Russia out of the various committee chairmanships and other offices to which it legitimately aspired. The mood of the Assembly hardened, and when Vishinky

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finally presented his proposal of a five-power peace pact he did so in language that made it sound rather more like a declaration of war. The single modest agreement achieved in the general area of atomic control was one to reopen discussions. As the President's decision dramatically proves, they got nowhere, and the meetings have now been suspended as the result of Russia's withdrawal over the question of Chinese representation.

It is a sorry record, blame for which belongs to Moscow at least as much as to Washington. But for all that, certain facts should be kept in mind. When Russia produced the bomb, the control plan as it stood became obsolete. Russian objections had centered on three chief points: the application of the plan by stages, with the United States maintaining a monopoly over the bomb until the full plan had been carried into effect; the proposal to abolish the veto; and the ownership, distribution, and control of all atomic plants and sources of fissionable material by the international authority. Without regard to the merits or workability of these provisions, it is easy to see that the first was simply abolished by Russia's production of an atomic explosive. Without a monopoly we have nothing to give or to bargain with. This fact alone necessitated a different approach both to the question of an agreement and to the policy it was calculated to support.

But our government has given no sign that it recognizes any fundamental change in the balance of power. Instead of proceeding to reconsider defense and foreign policies in the light of Moscow's capacity to drop atomic bombs wherever it needs to, Washington simply met the new threat by a dreadful counter-threat—the H-bomb.

TO BELIEVE that the President had "no other choice" is to accept the illusion that the H-bomb will restore the superiority America lost when Russia smashed our atomic monopoly. It will of course do nothing of the sort, for this time there may be no time lag. The statement issued last Saturday by twelve leading nuclear physicists pointed out that since we do not yet possess the hydrogen bomb but have let the Russians know we are developing it, they can get to work on it immediately, if they have not already started. And when both nations have achieved their purpose and created what scientists describe as not a "weapon of war but a means of extermination of whole populations," then the race must go on again—on and on, for no weapon is "ultimate" this side of total annihilation.

The twelve scientists said some important things: One, that "few of the men who publicly urged the President to make this decision can have realized its full import." Two, that to use the bomb "would be a betrayal of all standards of morality and of Christian civilization itself." Three, that to create "such an ever-present peril for all the nations of the world is against the vital interests of Russia and the United States." Four, that new efforts to eliminate this and other weapons of mass destruction should be made "in all sincerity" from both sides. Five, that meanwhile our government should "make a solemn declaration that we shall never use this bomb first."

It is sad that these warning words, like Senator McMahon's proposal, should have come after the President's announcement rather than in advance of it. For a government like ours to reverse its course is difficult if not impossible. But at worst a decision is not an accomplished fact. We have not made a hydrogen bomb. Dr. Bethe, as spokesman for the twelve, said that a lot of research would still be needed; it was not a matter of "just putting the bomb into production." This gives time, if not the most favorable atmosphere, for a new attempt to work out a compromise on international control of atomic weapons. It gives time for a sober reappraisal of our over-all foreign policy, including our obligations and relationship to the United Nations and our own political objectives the world over. A rigid and complacent attitude in regard to these issues cannot be maintained, as the appeals from influential groups of citizens, pouring into Washington, make amply clear. The problems are to be sure staggering, but nothing is to be gained by pretending that they have been solved.

Paris Note

January 27

NOT much is being said about the British election yet, but all parties in France are waiting for February 23 with eagerness and with considerable anxiety. Everybody knows that the outcome will deeply affect the future of Western Europe. If the Tories win, the drift toward the right, which during 1949 became so marked everywhere except in Scandinavia, will be accentuated. All social progress, all rational planning, all controls will suffer a severe setback, and "free enterprise," as represented by men like Reynaud and Van Zeeland, will gain the upper hand—with resulting unemployment and other blessings, such as are already manifesting themselves in free-enterprise countries, particularly Western Germany. All the cruder forms of nationalism will be encouraged as well as the various brands of neo-Fascism: De Gaulle, King Leopold, and the rest will cash in.

Labor England, in spite of everything, has helped millions of people not to lose their democratic faith and conscience. If the "new Tories," who so frighten Priestley, should become England's spokesmen, many inhibitions in Europe would go, and those civil liberties which still make Western Europe worth living in would be drowned in a tide of intolerance. A Labor victory, on the other hand, would do more to save what is still good in the Western way of life than even Labor's leaders—often rather insular—suspect.

A. W.

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Decartelization—Our Last Chance

BY BRUCE CATTON

EUROPE'S industrial recovery, which has been hampered from the beginning by customs barriers, import quotas, two-price systems, exchange controls, and the like, is now facing what may be the worst difficulty of all—private international agreements for the control of prices, production, and markets. The unofficial but binding network of restrictions imposed by cartels is causing acute concern in both the State Department and the E. C. A. Six weeks ago W. John Kenney, E. C. A. administrator in Britain, warned that cartel arrangements share with government controls the responsibility for the almost complete absence of competition in Europe's basic industries. Paul Hoffman has also declared that "it is going to require immense adjustments in Europe" to meet the problems of monopoly control. The appointment of Professor Robert Bowie of the Harvard Law School to the post of general counsel to John J. McCloy, our High Commissioner in Germany, may be taken as evidence that the State Department now intends to make a real attempt to break up the great German industrial monopolies, for Bowie is to reactivate the Decartelization Branch of American Military Government, which under the Clay-Draper regime lapsed into complete ineffectiveness.

A year ago General Clay announced proudly that the I. G. Farben empire had ceased to exist. This was true only on paper. Farben had been split into a number of "independent" companies, each under a German trustee, these trustees being in turn accountable to A. M. G. Unfortunately, all but one of the trustees were old Farben officials and the actual structure of ownership was unaltered. The same people still owned Farben and the same people still ran it, subject to some loose American supervision.

THERE is no mystery about the failure of A. M. G. to carry out the decartelization policy proclaimed at various times by Mr. Truman, the Potsdam agreement, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Clay. In 1948 Secretary of the Army Royall sent abroad a committee headed by Garland Ferguson of the Federal Trade Commission to find out what had happened. The committee reported that decartelization had bogged down because (1) the army wanted to build up the German productive machine as an asset in the cold war and believed that this required the heavy concentration of German industry; (2) the top army people at that time expected that the Republicans would win the 1948 elections and that our decartelization policy would be changed; and (3) the British, in whose occupation zone the great iron and coal combines of the Ruhr are located, were never enthusiastic about the policy.

When A. M. G. set up its Decartelization Branch in 1945, three of the four allies—Russia, France, and the United States—agreed that drastic action was called for and proposed that all firms or combinations above a certain size should be broken up. The British advocated a milder step-by-step procedure, with each case handled "on its merits." A long deadlock followed. Finally, more than a year later, the United States suddenly switched to the British position, and the more moderate program was adopted.

The Decartelization Branch started actions against four large German combines: Henschel and Son (locomotives); Robert Bosch (*magnetos and fuel-injection* equipment); the Vereinigte Kugellager Fabriken A. G. (anti-friction bearings); and Gutehoffnungshütte (a broad combine of some 300 concerns producing everything from coal and pig iron to diesel engines, farm machinery, and synthetic oil). All these actions languished and died. The high command refused to push them. A little later the Decartelization Branch was ordered to lay off capital-goods industries entirely and to confine itself to consumer-goods concerns. Somewhat discouraged, the branch prepared a case against the Deutsche Linoleumwerke, which had won a completely monopolistic position largely as a result of the war damage suffered by its competitors. This case was quietly shelved in the upper echelons and never reached Clay. After that, naturally, there was inactivity all down the line.

HOWEVER sincere our efforts to reduce the stultifying economic influence of cartels—starting, logically, in Germany—much of the work must be done by the European governments. In Europe, however, the whole idea of effective trust-busting is relatively new and has little popular support. In addition, the desire of European industrialists to reconstruct pre-war agreements will increase precisely as the E. C. A.–State Department attempt to remove governmental trade barriers succeeds. Abolishing import quotas and lowering tariffs will undeniably have a serious effect on certain segments of European production. Many of the national industries now being revived are sadly uneconomic; restoration of a competitive Continental market will provide them with a pressing incentive to divide markets and regulate prices. Several European nations—notably Britain, Sweden, and France—have made or may soon make tentative steps toward dealing with the cartel problem by establishing investigatory commissions or requir-

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ing cartels to register, but their action must be regarded as no more than a promising beginning.

No one in Washington knows just how many pre-war cartels have been rebuilt. According to Wendell Berge, head of the Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice from 1943 to 1946, most pre-war arrangements provided for automatic post-war resumption. It is known that certain French industrialists, chiefly in the dye-stuffs and motion-picture-equipment field, recently sent out feelers to their opposite numbers in Germany. The French, naturally, want to have new understandings drawn up before German industry gets fully back on its feet.

Our own government, after a difficult period of trial and error, is at last coming to see that the restoration of Europe's economic health calls for more than pious words backed by dollars. The big question is whether concrete action now will be too late, whether we have lost beyond recovery the great chance to build an economic democracy in the heart of Europe. Certainly the integration of the European economy into a single market of 270,000,000 customers will not be accomplished by talk about a common currency or the advantages of customs unions. It will require a whole series of separate but related actions, some of which, fortunately, are being attempted now.

The Ordeal of Alger Hiss

BY ROBERT BENDINER

II. Psychiatry, Law, and Politics

EVEN among those who believe sincerely in the innocence of Alger Hiss—and apparently there are still many who do—few will undertake to argue that the jury went beyond the bounds of logic when it found him guilty of perjury on the evidence presented. What many suggest, however, is that when all the facts are known, the picture may look very different, that there is still too much beneath the surface to warrant a final judgment. By this they can only mean either that Hiss is shielding another or that the mystery is locked up in the allegedly tortuous mind of Whittaker Chambers, with Hiss as ignorant, and as innocent, as the rest of us of the plot that destroyed him.

Obviously it is not for me to speculate on the first of these hypotheses. If Hiss is concealing the truth for personal reasons, he must surely have weighed the consequences and chosen his course deliberately. But the strategy of his lawyers indicated that they, at least, believed the key to the affair to lie in the character and mental condition of his accuser. To explore this shadowland of the mind, they persuaded Judge Goddard to allow Dr. Carl Binger, a psychiatrist, and Dr. Henry A. Murray, a psychologist, to give medical testimony concerning Chambers, marking the first time in the history of the federal courts that men of their profession, testifying as such, had been permitted directly to impeach the credibility, not of a defendant, but of a witness.

The judge's decision and the testimony that followed were bound to stir up controversy in medical as well as legal circles. Probably little will be said of the matter publicly until the case has gone through channels of appeal to its ultimate conclusion, but it is hardly a secret that psychiatrists are sharply divided on the contributions to the defense made by their two highly respectable colleagues. Concerning their testimony, the crux of which is that Whittaker Chambers is a "psychopathic personality" and therefore, presumably, unworthy of belief, two questions were inevitably raised by the prosecution and echoed elsewhere: Was it medically proper for them to make a diagnosis on the basis of the criteria afforded them? And if so, was their testimony scientifically valid?

Not being in any way qualified to attempt answers to these questions myself, I can only report that of the three psychiatrists I consulted on the subject, two thought the whole episode a serious setback to the prestige of the profession. Both scorned the idea that a diagnosis could be made of a man's mental condition without any personal examination, simply by reading his works, hearing a third party, hostile to him, relate selected facts out of his life history, and observing his conduct for a few days on the witness stand. It was possible, they agreed, to learn a great deal from the works of a creative writer, but conclusions reached on such a basis were to be cautiously advanced as tentative and speculative, not as a definitive diagnosis to be sworn to in court. "If it were as simple as that," one of them said, "there would be little need for psychiatrists at all."

They were equally emphatic in rejecting the diagnosis itself, maintaining, as Hiss's prosecutor, Thomas F. Murphy, had argued in court, that "psychopathic personality" was a vague and unsatisfactory term indicating mild abnormality and that Drs. Binger and Mur-

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ray had lumped together symptoms reflecting a number of different mental states, giving them all the one label—relatively meaningless but ominous to the ear of a layman. One of the two critics I talked with told me that "a psychopathic personality, as one who does not suffer from a mental disease, may be a trouble-maker, but he may also be a superior person." In other words, his being a psychopathic personality "has in itself no bearing whatever on his capacity as a witness, since such persons may just as well be over-meticulous about telling the truth as given to chronic lying." A pathological liar is something else again.

From a third and equally respected member of the profession I got a decidedly different reaction. This doctor felt that the case marked an advance for both psychiatry and the law inasmuch as it recognized the need for professional aid in dealing not merely with "legal insanity" but with irrational motivations of behavior that fall short of the psychotic. The principle has now been established that these may be as vital to the understanding of a case as any other evidence. The way in which such psychiatric aid was applied in the Hiss trial, this observer admitted, was in fact deplorable, and the diagnosis was professionally unsatisfying. Yet these shortcomings were not to be attributed to the two medical witnesses but rather to the straitjacket imposed by outmoded laws of evidence and by the equally outmoded classifications provided by descriptive psychiatry. The first imposes the restricted hypothetical question, admittedly loaded by the lawyer who asks it; the second compels the medical witness to choose from among recognized diagnostic categories which the whole profession acknowledges to be hopelessly out of date.

For all the weaknesses involved in the procedure, however, my informant believed that the material which the witnesses had to work with, including a prior reading of Chambers's Baltimore deposition, in which many facts of his life story were set forth, was enough to permit a working diagnosis. If the hypothetical question omitted everything in his favor, it nevertheless contained enough undisputed information to establish, along with his writings, a revealing pattern. Similarly indirect methods are often used, I was told, where patients prove uncooperative—cases involving children, or defendants undergoing compulsory examination, or soldiers suspected of malingering.

From this conflict of opinion on the validity of the psychiatrists' testimony it is clear that the questions of principle will be thrashed out for years to come. If the precedent forces a broadening of the laws on evidence and at the same time compels psychiatry to square its archaic descriptive categories with its modern understanding, a great gain will obviously have been made. But if the procedure in the Hiss case is accepted as the pattern to be followed, the way is open for dangerous abuses. The reputation of witnesses can be wrecked with impunity, trials turned into contests between psychiatrists as well as lawyers, and the dignity of the profession gravely impaired.

Seligson

Alger Hiss

Apart from these broad considerations, the question remains whether a pattern of psychopathic lying was established in the career of Whittaker Chambers. It seemed to me, as a layman reporting the trial, that the inclusion of lies told as a Communist, under orders, was far-fetched and needlessly exposed Drs. Binger and Murray to the raking fire of ridicule laid down by Mr. Murphy. The same goes for Chambers's party aliases and his falsification of documents—acts which are no more psychopathic when committed by underground Communists than by conspirators of any other persuasion. Yet the appeal of the underground might well have been regarded as consistent with seemingly needless lies and aliases in his pre-Communist life, with his weird tale of fearing an "ambush" at the Hisses' home—kidnapping and possibly murder—and then staying to have dinner with them, and with other such splurges of self-dramatization.

What can never be lost sight of, however, is that for all its importance the character of Chambers was not the paramount factor in the case. Many who felt that he was lying in this instance or that were nevertheless ready to accept his testimony where it was corroborated to their satisfaction. Even a psychopathic liar, if indeed Chambers is one, *may* tell an important truth, however much he embellishes it to serve some inward psychological need. The gaudy touches, the downright unbelievable portions of his testimony—there were several in my opinion—may have been what W. S. Gilbert's grandiloquent Pooh-Bah explained as "merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." In any case, the verdict, I am certain, was rendered on

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the basis of the documents and the typewriter, not on the word of Whittaker Chambers.

THAT verdict is, of course, being appealed, but it was perhaps too much to expect that this circumstance would inhibit those who from the first have viewed the affair as a divine gift to the Republican Party rather than a deep tragedy of the times. No sooner was the verdict reported than the political pack, Southern Democrats as well as Republicans, let loose a torrent of indiscriminate charges. Senator Capehart of Indiana demanded the immediate resignation not only of Secretary of State Acheson but also of Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter, "because of his sponsorship of a convicted spy." Senator Mundt, of South Dakota, called for a ferreting expedition to hunt down others who have "contributed so greatly to the deplorable mess into which our foreign policy has fallen." And Representative Rankin was sure that if Hiss cared to he could "unmask a cabal of treachery to this country the like of which it has never known." The press, too, took up the cry, with a gibbering columnist in the New York *Daily News* predicting "the first determined effort to find out who were the individuals surrounding Roosevelt from '38 on who got this nation into a war which the nation didn't want."

To anyone familiar with the trial of Alger Hiss the irrelevant nature of these blasts is immediately apparent, but by the time the next election rolls around such dispensable items as logic will be lost in clouds of murky rhetoric. By Frankfurter's "sponsorship" is meant the fact that he recommended Hiss, as a top student at the Harvard Law School, for a secretaryship with the late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and testified to his good reputation at the first trial. Not only did a stream of witnesses similarly testify, but their statements were not even questioned by the prosecutor, who contended only that Hiss took advantage of his reputation to deceive his friends.

As for Mundt's charge, it is worth noting that at no time during the trial was Murphy able to show a single instance of influence brought to bear by Hiss in the direction of a pro-Soviet foreign policy, which is what the Senator means by "deplorable mess." On the contrary, Mr. Murphy had to minimize the fact that when war broke out in Europe, Hiss wrote a letter to William Marbury to the effect that international law did not require this country to take a position of neutrality as between the Western allies and Nazi Germany. This was a good two months after the signing of the Soviet-German pact, when neutrality was the watchword of the Communists, who, as even the *Daily News* columnist might recall, were like himself hysterically opposed to our being drawn into the war. In short, Hiss could have been a Communist or a "warmonger," but in October, 1939, he could not have been both.

According to Murphy, Hiss deliberately took this line on neutrality to conceal his affiliations, but in that case it is somewhat less than reasonable to damn his superiors for harboring a man with an excellent reputation whose avowed policy, at any rate, was anti-Communist. Obviously Hiss may have undergone a change of heart by that time, but accepting the verdict of guilt, down to the last allegation in the government's case, can one condemn two Administrations, with hundreds of thousands of employees on the pay roll, because one man was a spy—or even two, to include Julian Wadleigh? Wouldn't a man of Alger Hiss's background and personality have fitted into a Republican Administration as easily as into a Democratic one? Suppose John Foster Dulles had been President of the United States. Is there any reason to suppose that he would have barred Hiss from the government any more than he barred him from the presidency of the Carnegie Foundation?

It is true, of course, that Chambers made unsubstantiated charges to a high State Department official in 1940 that Hiss was a Communist—no hint of espionage—but what New Dealer was not vaguely accused of that at some time or other? In fact, if the Mundts, the Rankins, the Dieses, and the Thomases had not been so loose in their accusations, if they had not constantly reduced the whole issue to an absurdity, it would have been a great deal easier for responsible security officers in the government to spot the extremely rare employee whose zeal for a political ideal led him into the black fog of espionage. For it is well to remember that the crime that lay beneath the perjury of which Alger Hiss stands convicted was not treason—he had no dealings with an enemy state—but espionage; the kind of espionage that was committed neither for gain nor out of hatred for country but in the grotesquely mistaken belief that by helping the Soviet Union at that time the sweep of fascism might be checked and our own democratic freedoms safeguarded. As Wadleigh insisted on the witness stand, he was convinced that his own transmission of papers to Chambers "could not be used against us, but could be used against Germany and Japan." Defending Wadleigh from the defense lawyer's attacks, Mr. Murphy himself put the matter rather neatly. Wadleigh, he said, only wanted to stop the rise of fascism; "we all came to hate it, but he saw it earlier." So, perhaps, did Alger Hiss. Not for a second would I justify or condone the method used or the perjuries to cover it up, but if Murphy's analysis may be applied fairly, there is, politically and morally, a great gap between the crime admitted by Benedict Arnold and the crime denied by Alger Hiss.

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Are Cold Pills Safe?

BY MARTIN GUMPERT

HISTAMINE is a powerful substance released from animal tissues when they are injured by inflammation or shock. Allergic symptoms are generally connected with a too great release of histamine. About five years ago we received reports of French synthetic compounds which acted as strong antagonists to histamine and were successfully used against allergic symptoms, chiefly hay fever. Soon afterward the first American drugs of this type appeared on the market. They proved of great aid in a variety of allergic ailments, though early experience with them showed many untoward side effects, such as dizziness, dry mouth, visual disturbance, gastric pain, vomiting, urinary frequency, muscular incoordination, drowsiness, and heart palpitation. Destruction of white corpuscles in the blood was also observed. At least one death was reported. Persons driving automobiles or handling machines while under the influence of anti-histaminic drugs were involved in several fatal accidents. Today about twenty different brands, manufactured by reliable pharmaceutical houses, are available and are widely though cautiously administered by physicians.

In September, 1947, Dr. John M. Brewster reported in the United States *Naval Medical Bulletin* on one hundred cases of common cold of virus origin treated with anti-histaminic drugs. He was most favorably impressed by the results. The infection appeared to be checked in about 10 per cent of the cases and its course shortened in the others. He observed, however, that deleterious effects might follow large doses, especially with self-medication and in instances of idiosyncrasy. Patients should be warned, he said, of the resulting drowsiness and cautioned against driving a car or operating machinery while taking the drug.

Another study by Brewster appeared in the same Journal in January, 1949. By this time he had administered the drug to 572 patients with common colds. Of twenty-one patients treated within the first hour after the onset of symptoms, nineteen, or 90 per cent, were cured; 74 per cent of the patients treated within six hours of the onset were cured. In this article Brewster mentioned one incapacitating reaction due to a self-administered overdose.

A report by Dr. H. G. Murray in *Industrial Medicine* for July, 1949, describes the effect of early treatment on 510 persons with a head cold. The symptoms of 314 disappeared within three days; 83 were greatly improved though not entirely freed of symptoms; 97 received no benefit whatever; 22 had an idiosyncrasy with respect to the drug. However, we read in the *Illinois Medical Journal* that 32 per cent of cold patients given sugar pills which looked like the real thing reported that their colds were completely cured.

A few months ago the Food and Drug Administration suddenly gave permission for anti-histaminic drugs to be sold over the counter without a doctor's prescription. Everybody knows what happened. There is big business in the common cold. Full-page advertisements appeared in leading newspapers; every drugstore announced at least a dozen different brands in stock; millions of packages were sold.

THE common cold is a mild virus infection. Numerous experiments with transmitting the unidentified agent have succeeded in men and apes, and the agent, like that of many other virus germs, can be cultivated on chick-embryo tissue. The infinitely small virus germs, some of them smaller than a protein molecule, multiply only within living cells and lead the life of perfect parasites, depending for their existence entirely on the host cell's metabolism. The common-cold virus is in all probability the toughest and most prolific virus on earth. It corresponds perfectly to the description of Dr. Kenneth F. Maxcy, the Johns Hopkins epidemiologist: "The microparasites best adapted for survival are those which cause infection with the least inconvenience and injury to the host, and create only a low-grade immunity of short duration."

Nobody can assert with a good conscience that anti-histaminic drugs cure the common cold or any other infection. They may be able to suppress some of its symptoms, especially if—as is often the case—a cold affects an already allergic person. But to most physicians these symptoms appear as part of a natural defense mechanism against infection; and we have many examples that the suppression of defense symptoms, like fever or rashes, may have an unfavorable influence on the course of the disease. More important, every physician is aware how little he knows about the nature of anti-histaminic drugs. In a high percentage of cases they cause disturbing and scientifically unexplained side effects, and it must be concluded that they are in no way suitable to be sold in unlimited amounts to the public.

The Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association in the *Journal* for De-

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cember 10, 1949, warns "against the indiscriminate use of anti-histaminic substances which are now being promoted for the prevention of colds and even for those suffering from colds." It declares that "experience with these substances is insufficient to permit knowledge of whether they are harmless when used over long periods of time," and that "the amounts taken in persistent colds may exceed what has been established as normally safe." The *Lancet*, leading British medical journal, has asked that anti-histaminic drugs be sold only on a doctor's prescription; and a New York State Assemblyman, Dr. Philip J. Schuyler, plans to introduce a measure to that effect at the legislative session next month. Most of the high-standard manufacturers of drugs have refrained from marketing "over the counter" anti-histaminics, and some of them have protested in circulars to physicians against the irresponsible practices of drug-gamblers.

Uninhibited commercial exploitation of the valuable but still largely unexplored anti-histaminic compounds is bound to cause a great deal of damage. Whoever started this rage and is responsible for the dumping of millions of doses of potentially dangerous drugs down the throats of Americans has done grave disservice to the people's health.

Election Issue: Jobs for All

BY DAVID C. WILLIAMS

London, January 25

WHEN British men and women consider how they are going to vote in the coming elections, they will be influenced chiefly by their view of whether a Labor or a Tory victory will best assure the continuance of full employment. For the past nine years employment has remained at about 98 per cent. With the memory of the jobless millions of pre-war years still fresh, this has meant a great deal.

Laborites never tire of comparing employment figures for the years after World War II with those for the years after World War I, and they claim full credit for the difference. Tories for their part deride the government's role. They say the cold war and the repayment of sterling balances overseas have provided an artificial market for British goods. At most, they concede that the relocation of some industries has helped to mop up a few persistent pools of unemployment. And they claim they would be better guardians of full employment in the future than Labor.

It is important to note that by "full employment" the British have come to mean a state of affairs in which only 2 per cent of those seeking work are unemployed. In America 5 per cent is still regarded as a commendably low figure, but that would mean a million jobless in Britain. The editors of the *Economist*, who are not running for office, can speak with calm of this figure, but few politicians can be so daring.

It is already evident that the continuance of full employment requires an entirely fresh approach to many economic problems. The economic picture today is practically the opposite of what it was before the war. Overproduction and underconsumption have disappeared and been replaced by underproduction and overconsumption. People save too little rather than too much. Government economists struggle desperately against inflation. Keynesian economics, which assumes unemployment, becomes less relevant than classical economics, which does not. The economic history of the past four years consists in large part of the strenuous and often painful efforts of the Labor government and its supporters in the trade unions to adapt themselves to the new order.

Labor came to power with a program which had been designed primarily to deal with a post-war depression, expected here as in America. It was slow to realize that it must deal instead with a world-wide boom and the consequent pressure on the British economy of high prices for food and raw materials. A golden opportunity was lost when the men and women demobilized from the armed forces were permitted to find their own places in civilian life, without any serious effort to guide them to the industries which most badly needed manpower. The trade-union drive for shorter hours and higher wages was not discouraged as promptly as it should have been. Hugh Dalton as Chancellor of the Exchequer maintained a "cheap money" policy which stimulated rather than checked inflation. Each Labor Minister, reveling in his new authority, embarked on a big capital-investment program in the section of the economy under his jurisdiction; although Labor had campaigned on planning slogans, there was little overall planning in the early months.

Even before the crises of 1947—fuel in February and dollars in August—some lessons were being learned. The government firmly suggested to the trade unions that they

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drop the drive for a forty-hour week. The word "priorities" became a favorite at Whitehall, as it was realized that each Minister could not do everything he wanted all at once. The effects of full employment and rampant inflation on production began to be noted. One virtue of underconsumption is that reserve stocks build up at every point in the productive process, so that industry can take such shocks as a strike in a basic industry or a natural disaster in its stride. Britain's economy is still, to a large extent, a "bare-cupboards" one, and troops must be called in almost immediately to do the work of strikers in any important industry or service, but in 1946-47 this condition was much worse, and the severe winter of that year put the country flat on its back.

THE experience was salutary. A group of experts headed by Sir Edwin Plowden was formed at Whitehall to keep constant watch over production and to warn of impending bottlenecks in time to avoid a stoppage. The capital-investment program was trimmed, and then trimmed again. Mr. Dalton tightened the screws on finance, and Sir Stafford Cripps, who succeeded him, tightened them several turns more. To deal with the maldistribution of man-power—too many workers in unessential industries and too few in essential—the government assumed the power to direct labor. To hold down inflation, it announced a new policy for the voluntary limitation of wages and other personal income. Dividends were practically frozen, and the rate of wage increases fell by a half.

These measures were announced as temporary, but they, or something very like them, may be necessary as long as full employment continues. The direction of labor, for example, which for a long while was very leniently applied, is now to be made stricter. Wage restraint seems to be a necessary concomitant of full employment. Writing early last year, Professor W. A. Lewis said: "Full employment and an uncontrolled level of wages are incompatible, and sooner or later one must give in to the other. Either the workers must understand this and agree to stabilization, or harassed governments will be tempted to answer further wage demands with some deflation or to follow in the footsteps of Hitler and Stalin in controlling wages from above." It is a measure of the speed with which British labor is growing up to its responsibilities that the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress has now taken upon itself the heroic task of inducing its affiliated unions to agree to a wages standstill.

Meanwhile the paramount need of producing more goods more cheaply and efficiently is beginning to receive the attention it deserves. Such a moderate political leader as Herbert Morrison is not at all bashful about emulating the Russians in at least one respect and urging workers to think less about higher wages and more about higher output. Influenced by fear of unemployment, British workers in the past imposed many restrictions—on the number of machines each worker should tend, on the introduction of new machines, on the use of incentive wage systems, on the maximum daily output per worker, and so on. They will abolish these as they become convinced of the enduring reality of full employment; indeed, they must abolish them if full employment is to succeed.

More serious are the obstacles to higher production due to management policies. In the stagnant inter-war years British industry was geared to small markets. Fair shares for all manufacturers in what demand existed was the watchword, and prices were set high enough to keep even the most inefficient producer above water. Now that full employment has created high purchasing power, efficient companies are making money hand over fist, and bankruptcies have dwindled almost to the vanishing point. In consequence, thousands of inefficient producers are wasting man-power and materials.

Some means must be found to make the British economy more flexible. The workers must become more willing to accept new machinery and methods. They must be willing, if necessary, to learn new skills and to move from unessential to essential jobs. The government must take more vigorous action to break up cartels and price-fixing rings. The Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Commission is a mere popgun in a battle where heavy artillery is required. One of the more original projects of the Economic Cooperation Administration has been to send the executive secretary of the commission to Washington to pick up American "know-how" in trust-busting. American achievements in this respect are now taken more seriously here than in the United States. One Labor M. P. and business executive said to me: "We know that as soon as a business combination is broken up, it seeks to come together in other forms. Trust-busting is like painting the Brooklyn Bridge—no sooner do you finish at one end than you have to start again at the other. But the bridge is in a lot better condition than if you had done nothing."

VOICES are not lacking, at least outside the political arena, to suggest an alternative solution to Britain's problems, namely, a severe deflation of the type Dr. Erhard has instituted in the western, or free-enterprise, half of Germany. Proponents of this scheme frankly admit that it would provoke unemployment and bankruptcies; that is just what they want. Bankruptcy would drive the inefficient producer out of business, and the man-power and materials released would move to the efficient producers. Also, though this is less frankly stated, the threat of unemployment would spur the workers to greater effort and hold down wages. In a community so far advanced toward disintegration

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as post-war Germany, this may for a time work better than full-employment socialism. It is something like the New Economic Policy with which Lenin sought to shock the infant Soviet Union out of the stagnation into which it settled after the civil war. If people are not minded to pull together in harmony, the raising of the individualistic slogan "Enrich yourself!" may be defensible.

It is unlikely to work in Britain. This island community has always shown great internal cohesion; that has indeed been the secret of its high degree of tolerance, and of its success with political democracy as compared with the nations of the Continent. If deflation struck, business men would probably stick even closer together. Unions would restrict output, spread work, and save jobs. Whatever progress has been made in promoting a positive attitude toward high output and efficiency would be wiped out.

If Britain is to move forward to make full employment a success, much hard work and hard thinking will be necessary. Future governments are likely to try to hold unemployment within 1 to 3 per cent. When unemployment rises above 3 per cent, it will be the signal for government spending, on projects already prepared; when it sinks below 1 per cent, the government will take financial and other measures to counter the threat of dangerous inflation. It is probable that full employment means a continued mild inflation, which is, in fact, desirable, since it constantly reduces the burden of debt upon current production. If output goes up 3 per cent a year, money incomes might be permitted to rise 5 per cent or so. Higher wages should go where they will be of most value to the economy as a whole. It has been suggested that in the not too distant future the unions might bargain, not with their private or public employers, but among themselves for the distribution of each year's increment in the total national wage.

Full employment, however desirable in many respects, is therefore not pure gain. Some freedoms which American workers regard highly—the freedom to choose any job whether essential or non-essential, the freedom to press for the highest wage that can be squeezed out of an industry without assuming any responsibility for higher output—may have to be sacrificed, temporarily or for good. But all British political parties agree that the British voter wants it enough to pay the price.

CAN THE LEFT MAKE A COME-BACK?

III. The Price of Unity

BY J. ALVAREZ DEL VAYO

THE advance of reaction everywhere in Europe has made it imperative for the left to form some kind of united front. I recognize, of course, that there are many serious obstacles to unity between the two great sections into which the left is divided—the Communists and the non-Communists. One is the delusion which each cherishes that it can resist the forces of the right without the help of the other. Their mutual animosity is so intense that no reconciliation can be hoped for until each realizes that it needs the other—or both realize that nothing less than the whole force of labor and progressive opinion can prevent steady progress toward fascism and war.

All the Socialist parties of the Continent have lost influence since the end of the war. The growing weakness of the French Socialist Party, for example, was clearly revealed at the last regular congress, held in Paris in July. The secretary general's report showed that in the preceding year membership had dropped from 240,000 to 140,000. Not less serious for a party that depends on the support of the workers was the change noted by the Paris *Monde*. "The party may have kept its working-class membership," the *Monde* said in its report of the meeting, "but its representatives in Parliament, like the delegates to the congress, have more the air of belonging to the middle class." Testimony to the same effect was given in the congress itself by a center group—as distinguished from Dr. Boutbien's left wing—headed by André Philip. A statement issued by this faction said that "the Socialist Party, owing to its participation in governments more and more dominated by conservatives, seems to the oppressed masses to be joining forces with them [the conservatives] or at any rate to be a pawn in their hands." M. Philip, who has been a member of various Cabinets since 1945, believed the Socialist Ministers may soon have no alternative but to withdraw from the government. One thing is certain. The French Socialist Party never had more prestige and independence, more real strength among the people, than in 1934-36, when the Popular Front existed, and in 1944-45, at the time of the Liberation—the two periods when it was cooperating with the Communist Party.

The Communists claim that their power is undiminished. The Italian party has even officially announced that its membership increased in 1949 by about 200,000 and today totals 2,300,000. About the French Communists, reports are contradictory: some specialists

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in party statistics say that the membership has fallen from 1,000,000 in 1947 to about 900,000 today; the Communists themselves deny this. In both France and Italy the party has still great influence among the workers. On January 12 an order from its Rome headquarters brought to a stop all the transportation services of the capital in protest against brutal action by the police in Modena. (The brutality was admitted by Arnaldo Cortesi, the New York *Times* correspondent, himself a conservative and favorable to De Gasperi.)

Pietro Nenni

But election results show that in most countries the Communists have lost ground. Except in Finland, where they registered gains a few weeks ago although the rightist coalition won, they hold fewer seats in the various national assemblies; in some cases the number of Communist voters remained the same or even increased, but the vote of party sympathizers fell off. The importance of these "sympathizers" will be recognized if one recalls that in 1946 the party in France had about a million members but polled 5,475,975 votes.

In the unions, and especially in the international labor movement, the Communists' loss of strength is even more apparent. The World Federation of Trade Unions, in which they are dominant, is now opposed by the numerically powerful International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, founded last December in London; the new organization includes the C. I. O. and the British unions, formerly affiliated with the W. F. T. U.

No one could deny that Mao Tse-tung's victory in China will benefit the world Communist movement. Nevertheless, it will not have sufficient effect on the political situation in Europe to make up for the setbacks the Communists have suffered everywhere outside the Soviet orbit. However, it is for the Communists to decide whether they feel strong enough to oppose the forces of reaction by themselves. If they do, my whole analysis of the possibilities of a come-back for the left is superfluous. But if, as I am convinced, reaction can be checked only by a united front, at least on certain basic issues, then we must honestly and directly face the problem of how such a front is to be reestablished.

First of all, Socialists and Communists must resume civilized relations. The Socialists must no longer consider, and describe, the Communists as worse than the fascists, old and new; the Communists must stop calling the Socialists traitors, social fascists, lackeys of Wall Street, and agents of imperialism. The left is of course not limited to these two groups, but while the cold war between them continues, nothing that resembles a popular front is possible.

Secondly, the Communists must be willing to deal with the Socialists as equals to equals. They can never expect any Socialist Party outside the Soviet orbit to merge with them or be absorbed by them. It was to make this fact clear that I described the recent congress of the Parti Socialiste Unitaire in the first article of this series. One can hardly imagine a Socialist party more receptive to the idea of working with the Communists for a common program than this diminutive party. Yet even the P. S. U. rejects the idea of a merger or of an identical position. The same thing is true of the Nenni wing of the Italian Socialist Party. Although at one time there was strong pressure for union with the Communists, the party never agreed, and the idea was subsequently dropped. Cooperation coupled with independence—that is the predominant view even of the farthest left Socialist parties.

RELATIONS between Socialists and Communists have been further worsened by the war waged by the two Internationals. The Comisco, a poor substitute for the old Second International, takes its tone from the most bitterly anti-Communist of the European Socialists. One left party after the other has been excluded—the Nenni wing of the Italian Socialists, the Spanish Socialist party (Peña-Lamoneda), and others. On the other hand, Comisco has taken in all the Socialist groups exiled from Eastern Europe, groups whose ruling passion is to fight the party that forced them to leave their country. The Comisco serves as the rostrum for their attacks. The voice of a Harold Laski or of a Grumbach, which once could be heard expressing a spirit of moderation or directing attention to the positive tasks of European socialism, is now lost in the chorus of imprecations against the U. S. S. R. and the Cominform. This is echoed by much of the Socialist press in language no milder, and sometimes even more violent, than that of *l'Aurore* or the New York *Journal American*. Members of the Comisco should realize that if the U. S. S. R. and all the Communist parties of Europe disappeared tomorrow, the Socialists would immediately take their place on the bench of the accused and be reviled by conservatives exactly as the Communists are today. Every Socialist ought to read "The Road Ahead" by John T. Flynn, which the *Reader's*

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Digest summarizes in its February issue with the obvious intention of helping the Conservatives in the British elections. It is the most vicious attack on the Labor government yet published: communism and socialism, it says, are one and the same and must be equally destroyed.

The Cominform, for its part, yields nothing to the Comisco in the violence of its language. The communiqué issued after each meeting of the executive always contains vitriolic denunciations of the Socialists. The Socialist "masses" are summoned to rebel against their leaders. These masses, however, do not care to have outsiders tell them what they should do; and, besides, the experience of groups which have split off from the Social Democratic parent body shows that the Communists, for all their talk of popular front, have little use for organizations which remain really independent. The recent congress of the French Parti Socialiste Unitaire made that clear. After at first practically ignoring the congress, *l'Humanité* openly criticized the views expressed there. It evidently considered the party's insistence on internal democracy and freedom of expression indirect censure of the Communist position.

That sort of thing must stop. If there is ever to be a real attempt to form a new Popular Front adapted to the new circumstances and profiting from the failure of the first Popular Front, it must be recognized that every party which joins the coalition has the right to keep its own individual character, and within the context of common aims to express its views on policies.

But the problem is not simply to bring together Socialists and Communists. In every country there are literally millions who fought side by side with these parties during the Liberation and who should be part of an anti-fascist coalition as I conceive it. These include Catholic workers, anti-clerical liberals, men and women of democratic feeling, and large numbers of intellectuals who belong to no party. Countless French intellectuals have been repelled by the Communist rigidity which allows no nuance of difference—even intellectuals who had been clamoring for some kind of truce among the various elements of the left which might be followed by more substantial collaboration. I am not thinking of those journalists, writers, artists, and scholars who, just as in the United States, have adopted an anti-Communist line out of expediency or fear. I refer rather to men of the intellectual courage of Emmanuel Mounier, editor of *Esprit*.

For several months Mounier has been engaged in a controversy with Laurent Casanova, one of the most brilliant French Communists, who has greatly influenced the thinking of his party, on the subject of the right to dissent. "You cannot admit the existence of any socialist theory but yours," Mounier says, "of any revolutionary party but yours. We do not reproach you for believing the ideas of others mistaken, or for hoping to change them, but for not tolerating independent thought, for regarding as weakness the multiplicity which is really strength. We maintain our right to agree or disagree with the Communists. Whatever you say, whatever you do, we shall not 'Koestlerize.' We shall support your position when it seems to us correct; we shall be loyal to the proletariat which you mobilize, because one does not abandon the proletariat. But we shall remain ourselves. No national front will be possible until these truths are understood."

BOTH Socialists and Communists must change their attitude radically if the left is to find a basis for effective common action. Occasionally there are encouraging signs. For example, the Central Committee of the French Communist Party adopted a resolution on December 10 last criticizing those who "speak of the S. F. I. O. as defunct in their locality, department, or factory, instead of trying to achieve unity of action with the Socialist workers." And progressive elements on the margin of the two workers' parties warned recently—in a *Combat* editorial—that "in the interest of all Frenchmen the Communist Party must not be left to confront reaction alone." But just when it seems that some progress has been made, a new controversy suddenly breaks out, and all efforts to present a solid front to the mounting assaults of reaction are ruined. Each side then explodes into reproaches that the other always sabotages any attempt to get together.

The various peace congresses have served chiefly as occasions for new quarrels. Their point of departure, however, was sound—the belief that the two different economic systems in the world today might coexist peacefully and even, within limits, collaborate. This thesis has been expressed by the Soviet leaders many times, by Stalin with characteristic calm in his interviews, by Malenkov in his fiery speeches. A peace congress based on this principle might have been expected to permit the free expression of opinion and not to insist that the views of one group be accepted by all. Unfortunately, persons who maintained their right to criticize both great powers—say, for their competitive courting of Germany—found themselves in an uncomfortable position and either declined to attend the congress or walked out after it started, risking in either case being denounced as saboteurs of peace.

The various elements of the left can attain an effective degree of unity only by frank discussion of a concrete joint program. This program might be limited, in the beginning, to the following activities: (1) work for an international policy which will make possible cooperation between East and West to promote the world's recovery from the effects of war, and support the United Nations as the highest international

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institution; (2) combat reaction, which in all countries either has taken over the government or threatens to do so, and pursue a consistent anti-fascist policy; this excludes any flirtation with the Nazis in Germany and any tolerance of Franco and the other little Hitlers now flourishing in both Europe and Latin America; (3) cooperate in efforts to raise wages and improve living conditions for the workers, who bore the brunt of the battle against fascism and whose active participation is necessary to any progressive regime.

I am perfectly aware that the problem I have discussed in these articles is closely related to the development of the international situation. Continued conflict between the West and Russia creates an atmosphere that is not conducive to a coalition of left forces. In fact, I believe that one of the principal reasons why the representatives of reaction are willing to prolong the present tension is their conviction that at the first sign of a rapprochement between East and West a large section of progressive opinion in all countries would throw off the fears and the psychological conflicts which have paralyzed it, and that the left would then rapidly regain its unity and its strength.

Reciprocally, a serious attempt on the part of the left groups to discuss collaboration objectively would help to clear the international atmosphere. Recent vague efforts to promote a fresh discussion of the whole subject of atomic control would be encouraged. Reports indicate that Moscow has shown interest in reopening the question. Writing in the New York *Herald Tribune* of January 27, the Alsops confirm this: "In the usual roundabout way a hint has been received from Moscow of willingness to launch a new negotiation, not based upon the Acheson-Lilienthal-Baruch plan." They go on to speak of people in Washington who are apparently disposed to respond to this "semi-demi-overture." Although President Truman's announcement that America intends to develop the hydrogen bomb will not increase the chance of conciliation, it has multiplied the reasons for a new attempt to find a solution.

Action in this direction should be undertaken by the left as long as any chance remains of substituting negotiation for provocation. For if war comes the issue discussed in these articles will become academic, and—unless revolution intervenes—the entire hope of preventing military fascism will be destroyed.

The Silent Treatment, II

BY JERRY TALLMER

LAST July, three months after the Beacon Press of Boston had brought out Paul Blanshard's "American Freedom and Catholic Power," I reported in these pages that 14,000 copies had been sold—far more than the average non-fiction book sells in a year—despite the fact that the American press had given it the "silent treatment." While the blackout has been lifted here and there since July, most of the press has still failed to mention the book, choosing to ignore what was clearly the publishing sensation of the past year. For by last week, less than ten months after publication, more than 86,000 copies had been sold, and a tenth printing brought the number of copies in type to 102,000. The sales curve held steadily at the remarkable level of between two and three thousand copies a week from late summer until Christmas, fell somewhat in the general post-holiday lull, and has now jumped above 3,600 copies a week. Two of the country's largest wholesalers recently sent Beacon their first bulk orders—for 500 and 1,000 copies. Even in heavily Roman Catholic Boston most leading retailers have put the book in plain sight on their counters—and gladly. Several gentlemen who once declined the opportunity to publish Blanshard now sigh wistfully and repent their error whenever they meet somebody from Beacon.

"American Freedom and Catholic Power" suddenly graced the best-seller list of the New York *Times* in the last week of June. It blossomed on the New York *Herald Tribune* list a few weeks later. Climbing gradually, it reached sixth place in the *Times* on September 18, fifth place in the *Tribune* on December 11. It has since descended from these heights, but it has yet to drop off either list.

In *The Nation* of July 16 I noted that "American Freedom and Catholic Power" had been reviewed in the daily but not the Sunday *Tribune*, briefly and unfavorably in the Sunday *Times*, not at all in the daily *Times*, in a few unpleasant sentences in the *World-Telegram*, and in no other New York City newspaper. The *Times* had refused to print any advertisement of the book. (On July 26, the *World-Telegram* gave its religious news editor twelve inches in which to announce that Father George H. Dunne's counter-offensive in the Jesuit weekly *America* would be turned into a pamphlet. Incidentally, the America Press advertised this pamphlet in *The Nation* of November 5. *America* and the more liberal Catholic weekly *Commonweal* have just refused to accept from Beacon an ad for the Blanshard book with exactly parallel wording.) Outside of New York, according to my clippings, Blanshard had been reviewed, in July, only in the Hartford (Conn.) *Courant*, the Birmingham (Ala.) *News*, the Providence

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Sunday Journal, and the *Christian Science Monitor.*

I have since received four other clippings from early summer: a one-and-a-half-inch "description" of the book in the Newark (N. J.) *Evening News* of May 25; a Unitarian minister's long, enthusiastic review in the Charlotte (N. C.) *News* of June 9; a favorable review in the Boston *Chronicle* of July 2 (this Negro newspaper was the only major Boston journal, outside the *Monitor,* to break the ice); and a favorable review in the Oklahoma City *Daily Oklahoman* of July 10. Of the magazines, I noted in July, not one had reviewed the book except *The Nation.* Several had reviews "in the works." Again a clipping was missing: the June issue of *Forum* had given "American Freedom and Catholic Power" two inches, called it a "fighting book."

WHAT has happened since? On July 30, in his syndicated column, Drew Pearson remarked on the stifling of Blanshard and revealed that sales had "skyrocketed" after Cardinal Spellman's attack on Mrs. Roosevelt. A rather tame pro-and-con discussion of "American Freedom and Catholic Power" was conducted by Horace M. Kallen and William S. Lynch in the *Saturday Review of Literature* of July 30—fourteen weeks after the book's publication. Other reviews, all very fair and some quite long, appeared in the August issue of *Commentary,* the summer issue of the *Humanist,* and the *New Leader* of August 20. On August 27—eighteen weeks after publication—the *New Yorker* ran a noncommittal seven-inch comment, ending: "It is hard to believe that [Blanshard] will persuade any but the persuaded."

Gideon Seymour, executive editor of the Minneapolis *Sunday Tribune,* wrote a long, thoughtful, and on the whole complimentary review for his paper on September 11, and this was reprinted in the Des Moines *Sunday Register* on October 16. On September 24 the Gastonia (N. C.) *Gazette* reprinted an item from *The Nation* calling attention to the fact that a copy of the Blanshard book could not be bought at R. H. Macy's in New York except on a written order—the only mention of this particular "merchandising policy" that I have seen except in the *Publisher's Weekly.*

On October 10—twenty-five weeks after publication—the *New Republic's* review appeared as one-half of a combined appraisal—or more accurately summary—of "American Freedom and Catholic Power" and Avro Manhattan's "The Vatican in World Politics." Out in Idaho, in the Boise *Statewide* of October 13, Vardis Fisher interrupted a series of columns on "what is wrong with marriage" to insert a long angry description of the way the press had neglected the Blanshard book. August Derleth wrote a Blanshard-Manhattan review for the Madison (Wis.) *Capital Times* of October 15, and two days later Murray L. Wagner called "American Freedom and Catholic Power" a "terribly important book" and urged readers of the Staunton (Va.) *News-Leader* and *Leader* to buy it.

Then on October 27, the publisher and editor of the Manchester (N. H.) *Union,* William Loeb, gave the book some unintentional publicity. In a signed editorial headed "Is This Tolerance?" on his front page he violently attacked the Universalists and Unitarians of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for inviting Paul Blanshard to address their state conventions. Loeb's diatribe provoked a flood of dissenting letters from his readers and a sharp rebuke from the Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire. By the time this little controversy subsided, almost everybody north of Boston had heard of Blanshard's book.

A great many more people heard about it on October 29, for that evening Don Hollenbeck, in "CBS Views the Press," discussed this strange case where silence and/or "the violence of an attack on a book [had] seemed to result only in its moving upward on the best-seller lists." Hollenbeck revealed that the New York *Times's* handling of the book was based on the following memorandum to Managing Editor Edwin L. James from the daily book-review editor: "Excessively contentious, quite unfair in its criticism of the Roman Catholic church, and with no large literary merit." This work of little literary merit, however, was included in the *Times's* list of "250 outstanding books of the year" which appeared on December 4, and on another page of the same issue it was named by William Carlos Williams as one of the best books he had read in 1949. (On January 1 the *Times* printed a book review written *by* Paul Blanshard.) In November, by the way, "American Freedom and Catholic Power" had appeared on the suggested reading list of the New York *Herald Tribune* Forum for 1949 in the category American Government and Politics. It had also been cited by the National Association of College Stores as the second-fastest selling book on campuses across the land and by the American Library Association as one of "fifty leading religious books" of the year.

Neither *Time* nor *Newsweek* included 1949's most controversial book in their year-end literary round-up. Neither has yet reviewed it. Nor has *Harper's.* T. Robert Ingraham strongly attacks the book in the February issue of the *Atlantic Monthly,* but the editors, however late in recognizing its existence, have had the courage to let its author reply to the attack in the same issue.

If my clippings are reliable, no newspaper or magazine of general circulation not specified here has permitted a comment on Blanshard, pro or con. But the book sells, and only a few stores still treat it like Krafft-Ebing. The other day a lady told me she had raised a row in Macy's because the book was not on the shelves. "But, Madam," an assistant floor manager assured her, "we don't carry 'Little Black Sambo' either."

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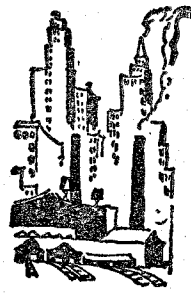

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

BY KEITH HUTCHISON

Is Money Too Cheap?

AT THE annual meeting of the Chase National Bank, which I attended last week, there was considerable applause for stockholders who complained that since 1940 dividend payments had been increased only from $1.40 to $1.60 a share. One speaker described owners of bank stocks as "forgotten men"; another applied the adjective "starving" to them, although this seemed a singularly inaccurate description of most of the samples present.

It is true, however, that bank dividends have tended to lag behind those of industrial companies in recent years. This is partly due to directorial policy. Thus while Winthrop Aldrich, chairman of Chase, claims that his board is more generous than those of most New York banks, it distributed in 1949 only 61 per cent of earnings compared with 76 per cent in 1940. However, this conservatism is understandable since Chase's ratio of total capital funds to deposits, although higher than in 1940, is still under 8 per cent.

Replying to the grumblers, Mr. Aldrich declared that low dividends simply reflected the inadequate earnings—5.8 per cent on average capital funds—which were themselves mainly due to the extremely low interest rates deliberately maintained by the government. More than half Chase's assets are federal obligations affording an average yield of 1.27 per cent. The average return on its loans to customers, which is of course geared to government interest rates, is 2.34 per cent. From the bankers' point of view, money is decidedly too cheap, and they are pressing the Administration to allow it to become dearer. However, it would hardly suit their book, or their books, if the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board pulled all props from under the government bond market. That would result in a rise in interest rates, but it might also involve the banks in serious capital losses, for as yields on governments rose, the value of their holdings, particularly of long-term issues, would decline.

What is the public stake in this matter? At first sight it would appear to be well protected by the Treasury, which is very insistent on the maintenance of the lowest possible interest rates. Treasury spokesmen point out that the cost of servicing the national debt is already well in excess of $5 billion—some 13 per cent of the national budget—and that a rise of one-half of one per cent in average interest rates would cost taxpayers an additional $1¼ billion annually. They insist that low yields and stable prices for government obligations are essential for the success of the constant refunding operations that have to be undertaken—$50 billion of marketable debt matures in the next twelve months—and assert that any appreciable hardening of money rates would restrict credit and create deflationary pressures.

Recently these arguments have been challenged, not merely by private bankers, but by those concerned with monetary policy in relation to national economic stability and the maintenance of a high level of unemployment. Thus Marriner Eccles, former chairman and now a member of the Federal Reserve Board, when testifying on December 2 before the Subcommittee on Money, Credit, and Fiscal Policies of the Joint Congressional Committee on the Economic Report, declared: "In making a cheap money market for the Treasury, we cannot avoid making it for everybody. All monetary and credit restraints are gone under such conditions; the Federal Reserve becomes simply an engine of inflation."

In the very able report it issued last month, the subcommittee, whose chairman is Senator Paul Douglas, gave general support to Mr. Eccles's views. Monetary controls, it stated, are among the most important instruments available for promoting the purposes of the Employment Act, but they cannot prove effective if they are to be used primarily, as they have been for a decade or more, to support the government bond market and to hold money rates at levels predetermined by the Treasury. Consequently, desirable as it is to keep debt costs low, the goal should not be given priority over the needs of a stable econmy.

The Federal Reserve, the Douglas report points out, has three principal tools with which to regulate the over-all supply and cost of money: (1) alterations in the rediscount rate, (2) changes in reserve ratios, (3) open-market operations—that is, Federal Reserve purchases and sales of government obligations. The first of these tools has been somewhat blunted by the decline in importance of commercial bills now that big corporations are accustomed to draw on internal resources for short-term financing; the second can be employed only at infrequent intervals. Open-market operations, on the other hand, are potentially an effective and flexible instrument for coping with either inflation or deflation, since they directly influence total money supply. When the Federal Reserve sells securities, the effect is to draw down the reserve accounts of member banks and thus shrink their lending capacity. Conversely, when the Federal Reserve is a buyer, it replenishes these accounts and provides the means for an expansion of credit.

But if open-market operations are to be carried on in this manner and for these purposes, the Federal Reserve must be free to buy and sell in accordance with the necessities of the total economic situation. It cannot perform its regulatory functions if it must shape policy to conform with the Treasury's desire for fixed low interest rates, for this commits it to pegging government security prices and deprives the open-market mechanism of its natural flexibility.

In the light of these considerations the Douglas report recommends that subordination of the Federal Reserve to the Treasury in matters of monetary policy be ended, that the former be made responsible for regulating credit in accordance with the purposes of the Employment Act, and that Congress by joint resolution issue broad instructions to this effect. This, I believe, is a sound proposal, provided such instructions emphasize that it is just as important for the monetary managers to move vigorously in a deflationary situation as in an inflationary one.

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BOOKS and the ARTS

Essays and Asides

THE GENIUS OF W. C. FIELDS

BY DELMORE SCHWARTZ

W. C. FIELDS was a very funny man, but it does not follow that his biography has to be funny too. He was a wonderful comedian and a purely American one, and a good biography of him might illuminate much more than Fields alone. Unfortunately Robert Lewis Taylor—working under conditions, probably, in which discretion and good taste prevented the use of much that was personal—has written a book* which is chiefly a collection of anecdotes tied together by biographical data. The result is a kind of W. C. Fields film, and an inferior one at that. On numerous occasions Mr. Taylor comes close to aspects of Fields which may have been the mainsprings of his profound comic powers, but he hardly ever does more than touch on these things briefly, perhaps because of an admirable sense of the feelings of living people who were connected with Fields, but also because his conception of a biography derives from the Profiles in the *New Yorker*, which are all very well in a setting of cartoons and advertisements but which are naturally remote from the questions that biographical writing ought to try to answer. Mr. Taylor's attempt to be entertaining is itself a form of irrelevance, for in Fields's life there was really little that was humorous—except in the old sense of the word. Hence Mr. Taylor's relentless succession of hilarious incidents becomes quite trying when one is teased by such problems as why Fields, like many other comedians, was so anxious, and so unhappy, and why he had to drink as much as he did.

Humor is of course a very important part of American life, and Fields's version and extension of American humor are sufficiently representative to raise other natural questions which Mr. Taylor's method eliminates. For example, Fields's father was a cockney Englishman; at one point in his career Fields met King Edward VII—like Nana and other theatrical personages—and this meeting became a matter of great pride to Fields, who afterward referred very fondly to "Eddie." Mr. Taylor does not try to connect these facts, or to interpret them, although the array of facts, here as in other matters, is full of suggestions of significance, and there may well have been some connection between Fields's cockney antecedents, his attitude toward the English, his use of the comedy of names, and his rich feeling for the comic possibilities of pompous, pretentious, or hypocritical language. This too is related to American humor as a whole, especially that traditional vein which makes the most of educated speech, illiterate speech, mispronunciation, jargon, the feelings of a nation which is partly immigrant in origin and afraid of book learning, resentful of the mother country, and at once afraid and scornful of Europe.

Fields continued the great tradition of Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and the matchless Ring Lardner—who is not mentioned by Mr. Taylor but who probably influenced and was influenced by Fields. There is much in Fields that corresponds with or extends those aspects of Lardner which are manifest when he refers to the Atlantic as "the big pond" (by way of disparagement) and in his detestation of Amy Lowell, free verse, and grand opera. The common ground shared by Fields and Lardner shows itself in another obvious connection—the extent to which they both hated Florenz Ziegfeld, for whom they toiled to be funny.

In some passages Mr. Taylor is guilty of more than the sin of omission, for he engages in a sedulous defense of Hollywood and Hollywood executives, who were the objects of Fields's wrath and satire not only in life but in his pictures. Although Fields's genius was a source of great profit to those who employed him, Mr. Taylor feels that those Hollywood figures who found Fields impossible were justified because he caused these unfortunate men considerable discomfiture. This is not to say that Mr. Taylor is at all unsympathetic to Fields. But his sympathy and his sense of Fields's suffering and unhappiness, particularly during the last ten years of his life, are at times superficial or patronizing. Gene Fowler, a friend of Fields to whom Mr. Taylor has dedicated his book and who probably suggested the idea that a biography is a vaudeville show, is far more sensitive in his life of John Barrymore, perhaps because on the surface Barrymore seemed a more serious subject. The lives of Barrymore and Fields resemble each other in ways which may be coincidental; yet so many accidental resemblances may be as symptomatic and as essential as the accidents which occur on a Fourth of July week-end.

Mr. Taylor compares Fields to Charlie Chaplin, and he thinks that Fields was the superior comedian. The question of who was better is not important, but a comparison of the two styles of comedy, their origins, motives, basic attitudes, and the like, might make a fascinating study if it were sufficiently detailed. Chaplin is innocent or naive, oppressed and downhearted, pathetic and threadbare, and yet deft, quick to escape from the tyrant and the cop, and to make the most of the worst; and he is profoundly silent. Fields is an out-and-out scoundrel with no reservations—he frankly hates children most of all—and he is overwhelmingly articulate, not to say verbose (redundant is one of his favorite words), in the best tradition of that key character in American life and humor, the suave and fluent swindler. Where Charlie skids around the corner rapidly enough to escape the falling lamp post or to make the cop the victim of his own cruel night stick, Fields envelops every situation of superior force in elaborate

*"W. C. Fields: His Follies and Fortunes." By Robert Lewis Taylor. Doubleday and Company. $3.50.

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schemes, alarming and mystifying reformulations, beautifully self-righteous attitudes, and a sophisticated cynicism about everyone, including himself—which is very different from Chaplin's melancholy, pathos, and hurried evasions but which is at the same time a response to the very same world and social set-up. Chaplin makes desperate and downcast efforts to behave with decorum, although the ceiling is falling down or the law is after him. Fields, faced with a bank examiner who will discover a robbery in which he is involved, lures this official gentleman to a bar and orders a drink for him, instructing the bartender by asking him if he has seen his friend Michael Finn lately. The two comic strategies are recognizable and pervasive: you can respond to a threat by being crushed or by being a crook, by running or by making a speech, by pleading or by bluffing, by making faces or by becoming as oratorical as a barker.

There are clear personal reasons for the contrast. Chaplin is a little man in fact and as a symbol. Fields tended to plumpness and looked a bit grandiose in appearance and dress—he had a distinct resemblance, and a perplexing one, to Herbert Hoover and Henry James. But the contrast may be significant of much that is more than personal. Chaplin is willing to make some kind of adjustment, genteel in aspiration very often, to all that is overbearing, pompous, or unjust. But Fields is openly committed to non-adjustment, to the principle that although you can't cheat an honest man, there are so few honest men that one must be pretty tricky, at the very least, to keep from being destroyed. There are few honest men, and the chief distinction is between different kinds of crooks, so that, since it is difficult to become a banker, one must become some other kind of crook in order to cope with the chilly and respectable infamy of bankers.

So too with ladies and with liquor, two leading comic subjects. Chaplin is shy, hesitant, and fearful of rejection by members of the fair sex. He really adores them. And alcohol—one source perhaps of the Al of Lardner's "You Know Me Al"—is ticklish, titillating, special, and disconcerting, and likely to conclude in weaving and hangovers. For Fields drink is an incessant and acute daily necessity without which a man can hardly function. And the only way to deal with a hangover is to have one more or four more of what he called "depth bombs," which are often used as panaceas, for existence itself is somewhat of a hangover. As for the other sex, the ladies are also depth bombs, sometimes to be approached cautiously; but certainly shyness and adoration are irrelevant, except as pretense. And if Chaplin often has to tiptoe past his landlady, Fields is in a more desperate case by far, for his landlady is usually his wife or his mother-in-law. (His encounter with Mae West in "My Little Chickadee" is, however, another story.)

There is much more to be said about these two comedians and about American comedy in general, and if Mr. Taylor's book is inadequate as a whole, it does suggest several fruitful approaches. Certainly the whole subject is an important one, if only because one real if not decisive reason why Truman was preferred to Dewey as a personality was that he toured the country during the campaign of 1948 giving an unmistakable impersonation not of Franklin D. Roosevelt but of Will Rogers, one of the first Americans to understand Russia.

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The Howlers of Howley

BERLIN COMMAND. By Brigadier General Frank Howley. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.50.

THE only importance of this book is the risk that some of its readers may take it seriously.

At the time of his resignation the author was Director of Military Government for Berlin and American member of the Berlin Kommandatura. "Berlin Command" contains neither a table of contents nor a name or subject index. They are not missed. Except for a rough chronological sequence, the chapters are all alike, and can be better distinguished by Roman numerals than descriptive words. Nor are names or subjects other than Brigadier General Frank Howley mentioned frequently enough to warrant an index.

The first three chapters contain some

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reasonably interesting material on the entry into Berlin which could have made an adequate magazine article. Thereafter the book disintegrates into a dull hodgepodge substantially devoid of historical value. Nor is this surprising. Howley had no connection with—or, it appears, much interest in—overall occupation problems. Even with respect to Berlin, the major questions of policy were dealt with at a higher level. No doubt an enlightening and readable account could have been written at the administrative level where he operated, but the author appears to lack both the eye to see and the tongue to tell.

Of these limitations on his range of vision and responsibility Howley has remained blissfully and noisily unaware. No doubt Putnam's is responsible for part of the incredible blurb and puff with which this book has been decked out, but the public sees and pays for the total product, and author and publisher must both bear the blame. On the paper jacket's front cover are nine pictures of Howley—there would be more but for interference by the letters of the title—and on the rear cover he is limned again. The frontispiece is a photograph of Howley, and that is the only picture in the book. The "author's information sheet" tells us that Howley "holds a record of sixteen hundred hours of argument with his Russian opposite numbers," as if diplomacy and marathon dancing were susceptible to common standards of measurement.

Other men, as seen through Howley's eyes, do not loom large. General Clay is condescendingly acknowledged to be a "scrupulously honest soldier" but is consistently depicted as a naive star-gazer and idealist "who finds it impossible to understand an unprincipled man." In fact, the most powerful criticism of Clay which emerges from the book is that he permitted so stentorian and insensitive an officer as Howley to remain in such an exposed and delicate assignment.

No target is too big for the doughty author; not even Churchill's literary style meets his exacting standards—it is "evasive parliamentary rhetoric" quite inadequate to describe the shameless foe. Let us mince no words: "The Russians are the world's most colossal liars, swindlers, and cutthroats." There's a good simple, straight-from-the-shoulder phrase to warm the cockles of the heart of any red-blooded fighting man! So let's use it again, six lines later: "By any standards of common decency they are liars, swindlers, and cutthroats."

This is the sort of blind, elephantine trumpeting which makes the book almost as dangerous as it is ludicrous. In the book Howley snarls that "you can't do business with the Russians except on their own terms," but in the "author's information sheet" he warns that "business with the Russians must be done only on our terms." Anyone who tries to "understand the Russians" is a "high dome" and a "crank." None of that stuff for our Frank! After months of preparatory study for his forthcoming assignment in Berlin, he knocked down the first Russian he encountered because "his uniform was strange."

The cold war will not be won by tying down the handle of the steam whistle. General Howley is an advertising man by profession, but howleying is not good advertising. His book's value, if any, is as a breathtaking demonstration of how not to conduct international affairs. TELFORD TAYLOR

A Full View of James

THE CROOKED CORRIDOR: A STUDY OF HENRY JAMES. By Elizabeth Stevenson. The Macmillan Company. $2.75.

IN THIS upretentious and discriminating analysis Miss Stevenson manages to "cover" in a systematic but wholly unpedestrian way all the major aspects of James's work—scope, theme, attitudes, technique. Her book synthesizes many scattered critical insights of the last twenty years, and one recognizes this or that review, essay, or chapter behind her passages on, say, the Matcham Bronzino or the Galerie d'Apollon, on pathos versus tragedy in James, on the fairy-tale element, on "point of view." But her gift for synthesis is a genuine one: all this material comes out quite

A SPANISH DEMOCRAT TELLS HIS STORY

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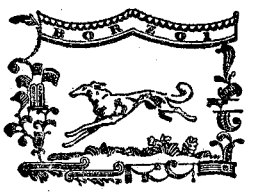

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freshly steeped in a personal response to James, and at the same time unified and related to a central emphasis in a way that makes her little book as lucid a statement as one could wish of what James has come to mean, or ought to mean, for the modern consciousness.

Miss Stevenson's text is James's concern with, as he put it, "the large, the human, the natural, the fundamental, the passionate things," the sense of quintessential life that vibrates through the "crooked corridor" of his art, the sense—on which he staked everything—of an indissoluble and infinitely fruitful reciprocity between life and art. This is the theme to which in its different connections her book constantly returns, and in the light of which she explores James's choice of social backgrounds, his moral attitudes, his technique, and his style. The result is not exactly a new James, but certainly a more comprehensive grasp of a view of James that has been long in the making.

HOWARD DOUGHTY, JR.

Some First Novels

CAPTAIN'S BEACH. By Sigrid de Lima. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.

BEETLECREEK. By William Demby. Rinehart and Company. $2.50.

THE FAR CRY. By Emma Smith. Random House. $3.

THE BODY. By William Sansom. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

"CAPTAIN'S BEACH" and "Beetlecreek" are first novels, "The Far Cry" a second. Besides sharing a kind of novitiate, they have in common an unpretentious and pleasing seriousness, even if they are not as exciting or as profound as their dust-jackets proclaim.

Miss de Lima is preoccupied with the daily trivia that turn out to be, for good and evil, of shaking importance in the lives of her characters. In her lower-middle-class New York rooming-house the landlady's daughter falls in love with the new lodger, and at the end of the novel we have no idea of what will come of their relationship; the landlord gets drunk and is hurt in an accident; and as the novel mounts to a climax, the landlady, obsessed and fat, dies quietly; three ancient crones comment on the action. This is a compartmentalized novel, lacking any large, over-all design, and reading as if it had been written simply to demonstrate how terrifyingly close the most ordinary daily life is to the abyss. But the awareness of the abyss is communicated.

"The Far Cry" is a variation on the theme of Elizabeth Bowen's "The Death of the Heart," except that Miss Smith's Teresa has better luck than Miss Bowen's Portia. *All* her relations die, and at the end of the tribulations of childhood she is left with a sympathetic brother-in-law and a nice old lady. Most of the novel takes place in India. Unfortunately there are many pages which belong in a sensitively written travel book. But the portrait of the child—a not entirely sympathetic little girl, and a welcome variation in the spate of fiction about the young and tender, those frequently tiresome twentieth-century versions of little Paul Dombey and little Jane Eyre—is quite convincing. Miss Smith is also very good at portraying the flux and anguish of intense and, one way or another, frustrated relationships.

Except that it is not deliberately complex and probing, "Beetlecreek" brings to mind Carson McCullers's "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter"; for it is about the barriers—only temporarily surmountable—which separate human beings. The immediate foreground is the Negro quarter of a small town in West Virginia. The central figures are an old and half-crazed white man, a hermit tempted to give himself "the right and power to reach out and touch people, to love," and a sensitive and imaginative adolescent Negro boy, the immediate cause of the temptation. The action the hermit takes, after a propitious beginning, is disastrous. The innocence of his feeling for the boy—he seeks a son as the boy a father—is beautifully conveyed. But to the Negro suburb he rapidly becomes a "sex-fiend." Ultimately, in a fit of hysteria, the boy kills him, demonstrating Mr. Demby's gloomy views on the racial problem and the universal impossibility of any lasting communication between two human beings.

I like this novel very much, though it has an entirely predictable and banal ending. Unlike Langston Hughes and Richard Wright and William Gardiner Smith, Mr. Demby has avoided the in-

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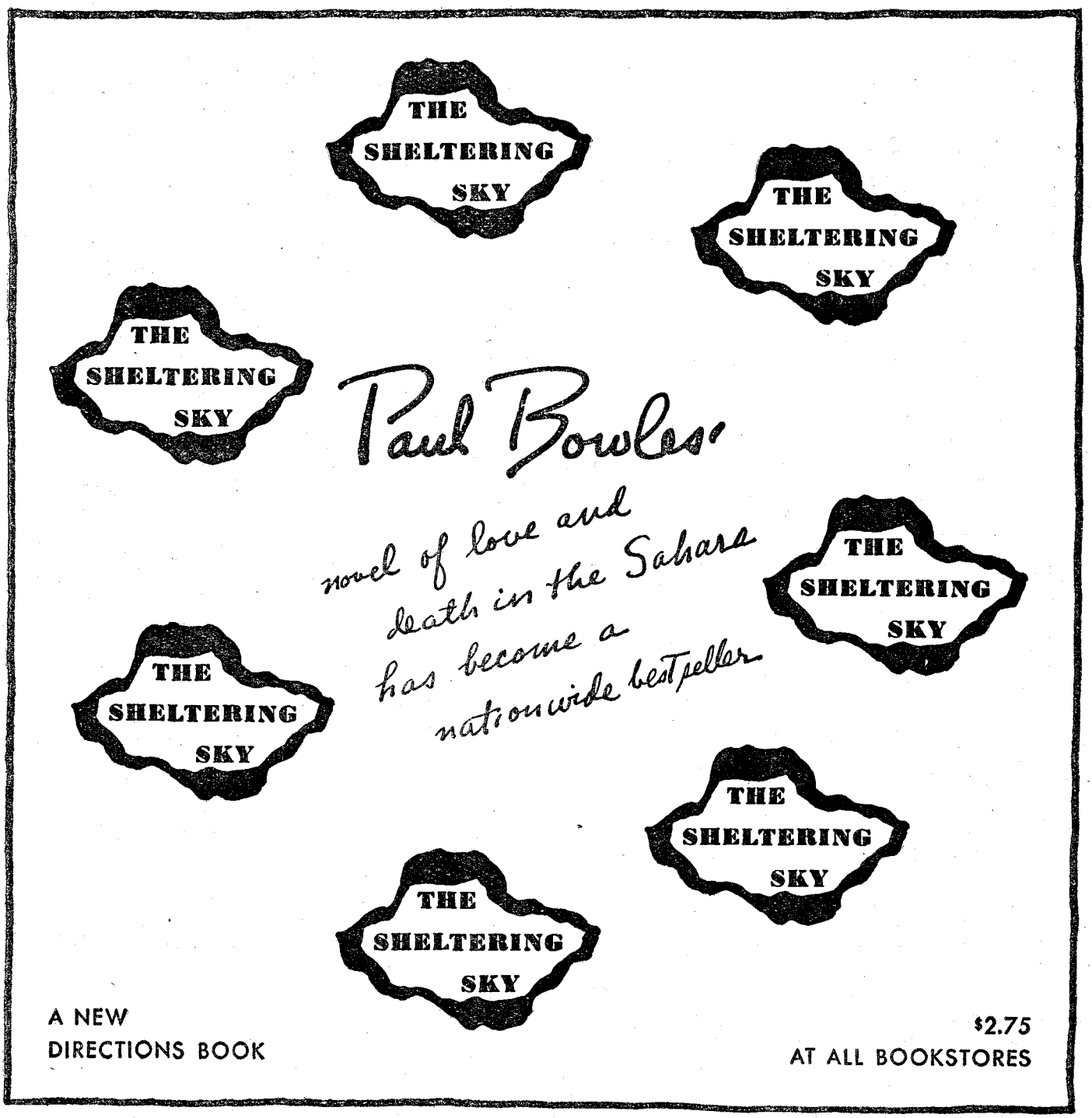
evitable pitfalls which beset the American Negro who writes out of his own experience. His book is only in a secondary sense about "the Negro problem"; it is no *roman à thèse*, except for the general gloomy view about *all* human relationships. To put it very tritely, he is interested in his characters first as human beings and then as black or white. For all his painful awareness of what it means to be a Negro in a small Southern town, he never merely exploits his subject.

He is better than Miss de Lima at the individual scene—perfect in itself and often informative in ways not strictly related to the purpose of his fiction, but fitting also into the general pattern. The self-betrayal of the boy, who turns on the old man so that he may be accepted by a peculiarly unpleasant gang of teen-agers, is wonderfully realized. The double treachery, to friend and to self, which is one of the more distressing phenomena of adolescence, is especially harrowing in a Negro society in which, as Mr. Demby sees it, the need to be identified with a group is even stronger than among whites. Mr. Demby displays, I might add, a passionate contempt for those institutions of Southern Negro life which minister to this need, for the church and the Ladies' Aid, the gang and the barbershop. Human folly, black and white, as well as the economic system, is the villain of this piece—an unusual and, some will think, an inexcusable lapse in judgment on the part of a Negro writer.

It is very late to speak of William Sansom's first and highly praised novel,



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"The Body," which is concerned with an obsession. A middle-aged London business man and householder unjustly suspects his wife of carrying on with the ineffably vulgar man next door. Before he is disabused he has very nearly wrecked his bourgeois peace. On some levels Mr. Sansom writes beautifully. His picture of the splendid and shabby Victorian suburb in which the action occurs reminds me of those poems of John Betjeman which praise so eloquently the special beauties of nineteenth-century British architecture. His studies in the brashness of the underbred are fine. Henry Bishop, once he suspects his wife, falls in love with his obsession and cannot give it up. Yet it is difficult to believe in all this. The evidence of the obsession does not add up to anything like conviction of its probability. I suggest that the failure here arises out of the very munificence and sensitivity of the documentation—decaying streets, neighborhood pubs, the local waterworks, genteel rooming-houses—which dissipate the kind of intensity of characterization Mr. Sansom wanted to achieve.

ERNEST JONES

Books in Brief

THE WOODEN HORSE. By Eric Williams. Harper. $2.75. The story of an extraordinary escape by three British aviators from a German prison camp by means of an ingenious scheme based on the use of a wooden vaulting horse to conceal the tunneling. Well told with humor, excitement, and a real gift for narrative.

OVERTURE TO OVERLORD. By Lt.-Gen. Sir Frederick Morgan. Doubleday. $3.50. The story of the preliminary planning of the European invasion (Operation Overlord) from its inception in March, 1943, to January, 1944, when General Eisenhower, who contributes a Foreword, took over. Not an exciting book, since it deals with planning rather than with action, but a clear and detailed account of an operation of incredible complexity, not the least difficult element of which was the constant abrasion of British and American personalities and techniques.

PERSONALITIES IN SOCIAL REFORM. By G. Bromley Oxnam. Abingdon-Cokesbury. $2. The characters and teachings of the Webbs, Rauschenbusch, Lilienthal, Gandhi, and Schweitzer. Bishop Oxnam has nothing novel or particularly illuminating to contribute, but his book is a sincere account of these six persons and their contribution to society.

LOVE STORY. By Ruth McKenney, Harcourt, Brace. $3. Wherever a shaft is sunk in the McKenney domestic life it strikes gold. This new opus deals with marriage and children. Most of it is funny in the customary and somewhat raucous McKenney style; part of it—the Hollywood part—is bitter; a little of it is tragic; all of it is good reading.

A TREASURY OF GREAT REPORTING. Edited by Louis L. Snyder and Richard B. Morris. Simon and Schuster. $5. One hundred and seventy examples of what the editors call "literature under pressure," although in most cases the pressure is more evident than the literature. The selections range from a sixteenth-century report of a witchcraft trial to a broadcast on the birth of Israel. The editors have cast a wide net—nearly 800 pages, mostly double column—and have caught a few rare and interesting specimens.

Drama

MARGARET MARSHALL

"THE TURN OF THE SCREW" is so effective as an unearthly story of ghosts that its significance as a great story of all-too-earthly human relationships tends to be lost to view, like the submerged portion of an iceberg. This may be a matter for regret; yet it would be foolish to object to a dramatization limited to the ghost story, especially since the tale as a whole is so beautifully integrated that a perfect dramatization of its "phenomenal form" could not but reflect the actualities beneath. These actualities, of motivation and behavior, are far more terrifying than a whole regiment of ghosts would be, and the wonder of the tale, aside from the knowledgeabil-

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ity and uncanny insight it displays, is the great art with which James uses the well-worn conventions of the ghost story to bring out, to enhance, and yet to leave no less mysterious than they are the frightening human realities with which he is dealing.

The trouble with William Archibald's play, "The Innocents" (The Playhouse), is not that it is limited to the ghost story but that the ghost story has itself been misread. As a result, we get only distorted glimpses of the realities beneath; the main point of the story is blurred and the exquisite minor points fall by the way.

In the book only the governess sees the ghosts; in the play they are visible to the children and even to Mrs. Grose —which makes all the difference. (I say even to Mrs. Grose, because the seeing or not seeing of this sensible country woman is absolutely crucial to the meaning of the story, and James makes it clear, in his subtle and precise notation, that Mrs. Grose, though she subscribes to the "normal" country belief in ghosts, does not see *these* specters.) The emotional tension of the governess appears in the play as the more or less natural reaction of a healthy person to what is assuredly an unnatural situation, not as the hysteria—that might well find an outlet in hallucinations—of a frustrated, overwrought young woman of poor but respectable origin. (James's governess is obsessed with class distinctions, and the part this obsession plays in the story is fascinating.) It follows that the governess, in the play, is portrayed as a heroine, and her reiterated desire to "save" the children is taken at its face value, whereas in the book it seems as clear as need be that the frenzied girl closes with evil, out of "infatuation and pity," in a struggle that is also an embrace—she ends by driving the little girl into illness and bringing death on the little boy. Again, in the play the character of the children's uncle, on whom the governess's romantic yearnings are fixed, after two interviews, and who has set the tragedy in train by foisting upon her in her struck state a responsibility she cannot bear, is for some unfathomable reason simply misrepresented. In the book he is depicted as a variation of Don Juan —which connects with the circumstance that the ghost of the evil Peter Quint, the former valet, is arrayed in his master's clothes; in the play the uncle is described as a collector and student of art, too absorbed, not in irresponsible pleasure but in disinterested work, to do his duty. And there are other changes, such as the fact that the age of the boy is raised from ten to twelve.

"The Innocents," in short, is only a shadow of the shadow of "The Turn of the Screw." Still, the play is worth seeing. It catches the suspense if not the deeper meanings of James's story, and it is nicely written. Mr. Archibald has inserted several scenes of his own devising, and to say that they do not, on the whole, violate the spirit of the original is sufficient praise, especially since most of them are written for the children. The setting and lighting by Jo Mielziner and the costumes by Motley are appropriate—and distinctive in their own right And the performance is often better than competent and ingratiating besides, though it is also uneven. In particular, there is too little variety in Beatrice Straight's portrayal of the troubled governess—too few ups and downs of mood to begin with, and too little sense of the rise of tension as the climax prepares. It is pleasant to record, however, that the acting of the two children, Iris Mann and David Cole, is not merely adequate and bearable—which is all one usually expects of children in the theater—but positively and at times extraordinarily good. Much of the credit for this, I have no doubt, should go to the director, Peter Glenville. (Brandon de Wilde started, in "The Member of the Wedding," what seems to be a hopeful upward trend in child acting and/or the directing of it—though the performance of the boy in "The Happy Time" precludes too much confidence.)

Records

B. H. HAGGIN

ON LONDON 78 r.p.m. records there are the Farewell Aria from Tchaikovsky's "The Maid of Orleans," sung with vocal opulence by Eugenia Zareska, contralto, with the London Philharmonic under Jean Martinon (T-5230); a sonorous and dramatically impressive performance of *Ella giammai m'amo* from "Don Carlos" by Raphael Arie, bass, with L'Orchestre de la Suisse romande under Isidore Karr (T-5232); and *Se vuol ballare* from "Figaro" and *Deh vieni alla fenestra* from "Don Giovanni," well sung by Paul Schöffler, bass, with the National Symphony under Krauss—the first taken at a pace which makes it a little hurried and restless (R-10124).

RCA Victor has issued on 78 the lovely *Care selva* from Handel's "Ata-

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lanta," beautifully sung by Florence Quartararo, soprano, with an orchestra under Morel, and idiotically coupled with an aria from "Andrea Chénier" (12-1000); *De' miei bollenti spiriti* from "La Traviata," sung in highly affected style by Giuseppe di Stefano with an orchestra under Erede (12-1018, with an aria from "Tosca"); and two Wagner excerpts: the dull Elisabeth's Prayer from "Tannhäuser," in which Flagstad, singing with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Dobrowen, produces beautiful phrases of lustrous sounds that are made a little harsh occasionally by tremolo (12-1062); and on the other hand the luxuriant, pretentious, vulgar third-act duet from "Siegfried," in which Eileen Farrell again reveals a lovely soprano voice with excessive tremolo in its upper range, and Set Svanholm a quavering tenor, and the Rochester Philharmonic plays well under Leinsdorf (DM-1319, 5 12″).

Victor also has issued a volume of Caruso recordings of arias from "Aida," "Pagliacci," "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Martha," "Carmen" (in Italian), and "L'Elisir d'Amore" (MO-1329, 3 12″). All except the last are dubbings with modern orchestral accompaniments; and the last enables one to hear the alteration in the color of the voice produced by the dubbing—something I was able to hear also by comparing the dubbed Italian "Carmen" with my copy of the original recording of the French version that Caruso made on the same day. But aside from the alteration in color the dubbings give us the combination of vocal splendor and power we have heard from no other throat.

I don't care much for the three Chopin songs—"The Maiden's Wish," "My Joy," and "Melancholie"—that Jennie Tourel, mezzo-soprano, sings well, with George Reeves at the piano, on a Columbia LP (3-325); or for the Beethoven settings of Irish and Scotch songs that Helen Traubel sings with good tone—with trio accompaniment by Coenraad V. Bos, John Pennington, and Warwick Evans—on another (ML-2085). And of the three Strauss songs that Lehmann sings beautifully in her newest Victor Song Recital (DM-1342, 3 10″)—"Du, meines Herzens Krönelein," "Die Zeitlose," and "Wozu noch Mädchen"—I find only the first moderately engaging. But on a Lehmann single (10-1498) is a much better song, Schubert's "An den Mond," also beautifully sung, with a somewhat feverish "Ständchen" on the reverse side. Good accompaniments by Paul Ulanowsky.

Allegro has issued on LP's the so-called "Schwanengesang" group of Schubert songs (AL-16, 2 10″), and a number of his settings of Goethe poems (AL-17, 1 12″), sung by Ralph Herbert, baritone, with Frederic Waldman at the piano. Each group includes, with songs I find uninteresting, some that are very fine—the first, "Liebesbotschaft," "Abschied," "Ihr Bild," "Das Fischermädchen," "Der Doppelgänger"; the second, "Geheimes," "Meerestille," "Wanderers Nachtlied," "Der Musensohn," "Jäger's Abendlied." In the Goethe songs Mr. Herbert reveals a fine baritone used with intelligence and taste; Mr. Waldman's accompaniments are mostly very good; the performances are excellently reproduced; and only the first side is a little noisy. In the "Schwanengesang" songs the voice doesn't sound quite as good, and there are occasional strain and harshness in high passages; there are also a few operatic sobs; the piano is not reproduced with enough power; and the surfaces are very noisy. The texts of the songs are not given, as they should be.

Allegro also has issued a number of Wolf's Mörike and Eichendorff songs, sung by Crane Calder, baritone, with Marion Carley at the piano (AL-24, 1 10″). They include the fine "Gesang Weylas," "In der Frühe," and "Verschwiegene Liebe," and the pleasant "Der Musikant"; they are very well sung, with good accompaniments; but in "Verschwiegene Liebe" the piano itself seems poor and the recording adds some strange low-pitched resonances. The texts are not given.

A terrible piano is heard in the songs of Haydn and Mozart sung by Earl Rogers, tenor, to accompaniments by Emilia Mitrani (AL-13, 1 10″). I don't care for the Haydn songs, but like Mozart's "An Chloë," "Warnung," and "Zufriedenheit," which are well sung. No texts again.

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HOWARD DOUGHTY, JR., is working on a biography of Francis Parkman.

ERNEST JONES is a member of the English Department at Queens College.

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Letters to the Editors

[*Below are extracts from a representative selection of the many letters we have received on Margaret Marshall's dispute with the* Saturday Review of Literature [The Nation, *December 17 and January 7*]. *Miss Marshall criticized the* SRL *for failing to print a protest signed by eighty-four men and women of letters against two articles by Robert Hillyer published and supported by the* SRL. *Mr. Hillyer, in objecting to the award of the Bollingen poetry prize to Ezra Pound, made serious but undocumented charges of fakery and neo-fascism against modern poetry and poets.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Literature on Thursday

Dear Sirs: Hurray for Margaret Marshall. And damn the eyes of the *SRL*. I find insufferably vulgar the pious smugness of declaring "formally closed" an issue which is perhaps more cogent to literature and society than anything which has happened to America in this area since the litigation over publishing "Ulysses."

Certainly the *SRL* is entitled to its opinion on this matter, whether that opinion is contrived to serve Robert Hillyer's vendetta purposes, Norman Cousins's political aspirations, or is disinterestedly arrived at. (I happen to think it's a rotten opinion.) But the *SRL* is not entitled to foster the impression that it is a literary magazine while it closes its columns to views of distinguished writers on a matter so fundamental to literature.

For myself, I'll be taking my review of literature on Thursday, from now on.

MICHAEL KLEIN

New York, January 15

Temper and Ignorance

Dear Sirs: The temper and ignorance which inspired Mr. Hillyer's articles, and apparently the editors of the *SRL*, should place their opinions beneath serious consideration. Aside from a few sophomoric remarks about the "Cantos" which he might have picked up from any tabloid newspaper, Hillyer's vivid noise never once touched the poetry. Instead he used valuable (?) space for a spiteful and ill-mannered attack on poets and critics of whom he might well be envious. I am glad *The Nation*, which has yet to suffer "exposure" as an organ of fascist opinion, has given space to an informed and scholarly rebuttal. Congratulations!

WILLIAM EDLUND, JR.

Denver, Col., January 18

Hoaxes and Handsaws

Dear Sirs: The *Saturday Review of Literature* tossed a skunk into the daisy chain and started what promises to be the most violent literary free-for-all of the century. Meanwhile, let's not lose sight of the original issue.

Why did the Fellows in American Literature of the Library of Congress give the Bollingen prize to a notorious fascist propagandist and certified lunatic who is also a master of modern verse? Let's grant for the moment that the Fellows know a hoax from a handsaw and that technically, at least, the "Pisan Cantos" are supreme. The question is: Are the "Pisan Cantos" innocent exercises in pure technique or are they more of Pound's propaganda, cleverly disguised? Many of the people who feel they understand poetry cannot make head or tail of them. Do the Fellows in American Literature, who presumably know what Pound was trying to do, consider the "Pisan Cantos" abstract or applied art?

The artist's purpose, is after all, of some importance. There are critics who might grudgingly allow a prize for abstract design to go to a criminally insane painter who sometimes also designs concentration camps. But I doubt that there are many who would give him an architectural award for the technical perfection of a seriously planned gas chamber.

Certainly poetry like that of Pound is difficult to explain. But the actions of critics who presume to act in a quasi-public capacity should not be. And people sufficiently interested in poetry to read the *SRL* have a legitimate right to be told upon what basis the Bollingen award was made, in language any literate layman can understand. It is the height of intellectual arrogance to refer to such people as philistines or to dismiss them as ignoramuses.

The controversy, in the meantime, has already involved far more than the Bollingen prize; in fact, T. S. Eliot seems to be the one whose scalp some people are really after—and Eliot is an old hand at defending his scalp. The fracas is undignified, perhaps, but at least it has put an end to bored indifference toward modern poetry outside a little circle. If Mr. Hillyer and the editors of the *SRL* have also aroused the admirers of the new poetry from their complacency, they will have done literature a very great service.

FRANK G. NELSON

Liberty, Mo., January 12

The "Saturday Review" Doesn't Like Literature

Dear Sirs: Let mine be one among the many names signed to letters thanking you for printing Margaret Marshall's comments on the *Saturday Review of Literature*'s hatred of modern poetry, and for printing the letter which the *SRL* was, naturally, unwilling to print. Without defending the *SRL*'s argument, I think those who were asked to join the eighty-four protesters and who refused should have their names and their reasons made public, so that people who can still distinguish art from politics—and who like art—may be warned against them.

One objection: I found Miss Marshall's remark that the *SRL* "has no right to carry the word literature on its masthead" either naive or based on an insufficient acquaintance with the magazine—for which, of course, she would have no need to apologize. Its attitude toward the Bollingen award is a logical continuation of its failure, or its refusal, to go beyond the most elementary understanding of literary qualities. It has consistently neglected good books, or showed awareness only of their most superficial aspects. One of its editors, Harrison Smith, wrote an editorial early last year in approval of an article by John Chamberlain scolding American novelists for not portraying business men as good, just, loving, ethical, and highly moral. If we mean by "literature" writing which conveys important truths, the *SRL* never had the right to carry the word on its masthead. As someone once remarked of a certain literary "critic," the *Saturday Review* does not like literature.

BERNARD MORAN

Chicago, January 10

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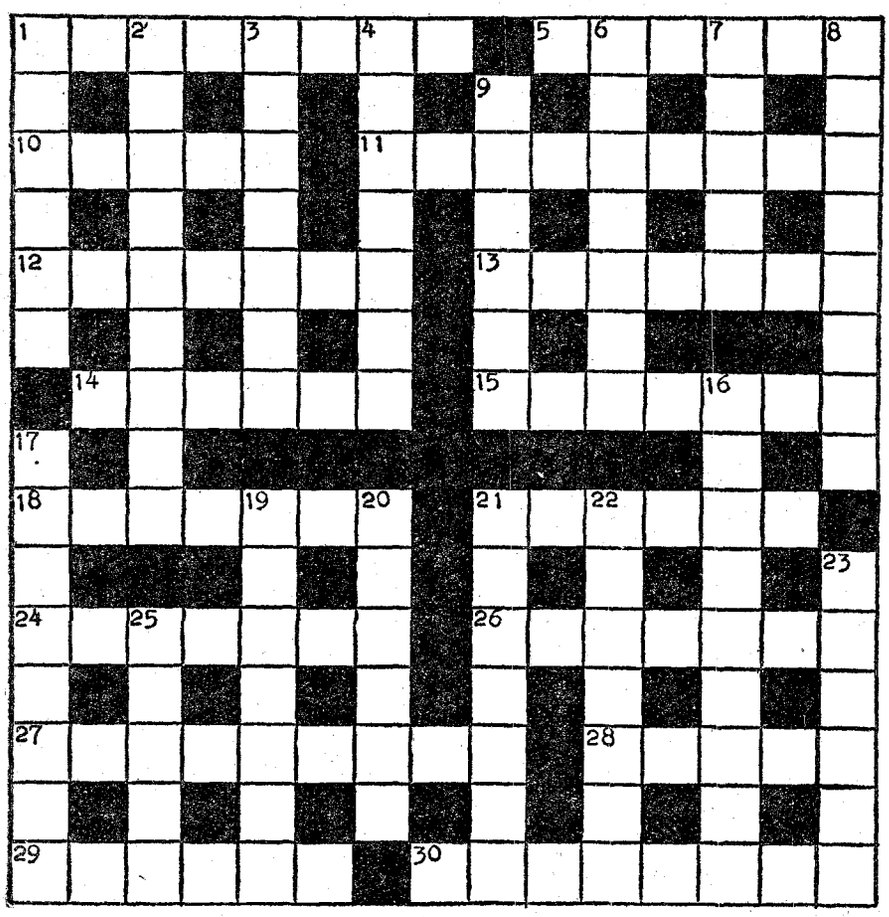
Crossword Puzzle No. 349

BY FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Impetuous. (8)
5 Distorted. (6)
10 Castles in the air? (5)
11 Numbered among Tarkington novels. (9)
12 Hazardous sort of lettuce. (7)
13 Walk like the lamb. (7)
14 Brazen. (6)
15 "What can _____ sots or slaves or cowards!
Alas! Not all the blood of all the Howards." (Pope) (7)
18 Rover, perhaps. (7)
21 Beer is better when it's just. (6)
24 Rose like 18? (7)
26 Pine for an example. (7)
27 Perhaps they ought to a little more, as a model for some periodicals. (5, 4)
28 There's little point to mine, if decapitated. (5)
29 Invitation to amateur tenors? (6)
30 Abridges army commands. (8)

DOWN

1 Responsible for Bucolics, Eclogues, and Georgics. (6)
2 Stolen carpet? (6, 3)
3 See 22.
4 Not the blooms that made Pinocchio's! (7)
6 Purely relative. (7)
7 Hewer to the point. (5)
8 One of these could be tender when sighed in, but not inside. (8)
9 Lithe. (6)
16 Two halves make only half of this. (9)
17 Held in cambered position. (8)
19 Necessary to bank, balance or roll. (7)
20 How to make ⊓ ? (6)
21 Concerned with kissing? This is. (7)
22 and 3. Rail experts. (7, 7)
23 Traces cases for shipping firms. (6)
25 The G. I.'s creed says if it does, salute it. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 348

ACROSS:—1 PATERFAMILIAS; 10 SCRUB; 11 YOUNGSTER; 12 ANNOYANCE; 13 RURAL; 19 BOUNCING BABY; 22 NOOKS; 24 PROCLAIMS; 25 OUT OF MIND; 26 NICHE; 27 LET'S BE FRIENDS.

DOWN:—2 ARRANT; 3 EMBRYONIC; 5 MOUSE; 6 LAGER; 7 ASTEROID; 8 OSCAR; 9 TROLLED; 15 EMBROIDER; 16 UNBALANCE; 17 ABANDON; 18 and 4 FENCING MASTER; 20 MINCED; 21 ASPEN; 23 SAFES; 24 and 14 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

Readers are invited to send for a free copy of Mr. Lewis's "ground rules." Address requests to Puzzle Dept., The Nation, 20 Vesey Street, New York 7, New York

The Germs of Fascism

Dear Sirs: The issue of the Bollingen award has devolved, to judge from your pages, into a feud between the *SRL* and the signatories of the protest letter. This letter ought to have been printed by the *SRL;* not to do so was a serious editorial blunder. However, the *SRL* did print very extensive articles and letters (Luther Evans's, Philip Wylie's, John Gould Fletcher's, *et al.*) and these were far more articulate than the letter with all the names. Of course, the names are just what made the letter so imposing.

Pound is a fascist, his poetry has a fascist philosophy, but according to the protesters, apparently, this should be overlooked in appraising his art—which must mean his poetry minus what it is all about. This might be quite a valid criterion on the planet Mars, where there are presumably no Jews, no Hitlers, no death chambers, and no Bollingen committee. On this planet, however, there are such people, such relevancies. And under these conditions of earthly reality it is only natural to consider the wide-ranging implications of a government-sponsored award for the greatest poetry going to a madman, a hater of Jews, a mocker of democracy, and a confrère of the mass-murderers who came so close to herding us, one and all, into crematoria, gas chambers, or slave camps.

It did happen to tens of millions in Europe; it could have happened everywhere. It still could happen. And Ezra Pound is one of the disease-carriers who would have had it happen. The germs are in his poetry. E. WHITNEY TARR

Brighton, Mass., January 15

A Correction

Dear Sirs: A serious mistake was committed in the editing of my article, Chaos on Our Doorstep, which appeared in your issue of January 28. The error occurs in the last paragraph and makes it say the opposite of what I wanted to say, thereby completely distorting my opinion of the Central American problem.

In the first place, there *are* first-rate leaders and progressive programs in the Central American countries, especially in Costa Rica and Guatemala. And as for the role of American capital, its functions, I feel, should be those of partnership rather than the intervention implied by the paragraph in

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question as it was printed. American capital should reflect its interest in the materialistic progress of the Central American countries, which do not seek a "decent share" in something that actually belongs to them. It is foreign capital which should agree to accept a "decent share" of the wealth produced in Central America. OVIDIO GONDI
New York, January 27

Service to the Nation

Dear Sirs: Many of the readers of *The Nation* are probably among those thinking Americans who in recent months have become concerned over the weight given to the opinions of military men in the conduct of the foreign affairs of the United States. There is the feeling that men prepared for the military profession have not the proper background, training, or attitude for wise decisions in other than the military field. They feel that the generals' invasion of the councils on foreign affairs may be the first step toward complete military control.

Many of those who sincerely fear this tendency would have had their fears allayed had they been able to visit the United States Military Academy at West Point recently.

They would have seen our future military and naval officers conversing freely with young men and women from fifty-two other colleges and universities in the East on the basic problems of United States relations with Europe. The occasion was the Student Conference on United States Affairs, organized by the Military Academy as an integral part of the training of its students for service to the nation.

The main purpose of this conference —and of the general education at West Point—is not to train these men to make the basic foreign-policy decisions for the nation but to give them a better understanding of international problems so that they may better carry out the decisions of the civilian officials in the politico-military field. The conference also served to give the civilian students a better appreciation of those military problems of national security which must be considered for the formulation of an adequate foreign policy.

One of the noteworthy administrative features of the conference was that the various colleges and universities were able to select their representatives on the basis of ability rather than on financial status. The Military Academy was able to bear all the costs of the students while at West Point from non-appropriated funds, and transportation costs were defrayed through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

If other schools could be encouraged by the experience at West Point to embark on similar ventures, we would not have to be so much concerned about the ignorance and lack of interest of the American people in the field of international affairs.

CAPT. ROBERT N. GINSBURGH
CADET JOHN R. BRINKERHOFF
West Point, New York, January 20

Information Wanted

Dear Sirs: I am preparing articles on the experiences of persons who have collected or attempted to collect claims on health-insurance policies. I will be grateful to receive the particulars of these experiences. All names will be held confidential.

CHENOWETH HALL
Prospect Harbor, Me., January 15

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We are alarmed at certain incidents of recent occurrence in American courts which if permitted to remain unchallenged may destroy the right to a fair trial and adequate legal counsel as guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment to the American Constitution.

We refer to acts of judicial censure, imposition of prison sentences and threats of disbarment against lawyers who defend members of political minorities, racial minorities and labor organizatons.

We believe that in times of political hysteria such as these, great courage and integrity are required of the lawyer who abides by that Canon of Professional Ethics of the American Bar Association which says that:

> **"No fear of judicial disfavor or public unpopularity should restrain him from the full discharge of his duty. In the judicial forum the client is entitled to the benefit of any and every remedy and defense that is authorized by the law of the land, and he may expect his lawyer to exert such remedy or defense."**

In just such a time as this, in the colonial America of 1733, the lawyers for Editor John Peter Zenger, charged with the crime of publishing criticisms of his British Majesty, were disbarred by the Tory, Chief Justice Delancey. They had refused to accept the Judge's dictum:

> **"You are not to be permitted to argue against the opinion of the court."**

In just such a time as this the great English trial lawyer, Thomas Erskine, was punished for contempt and removed from his office as Attorney General to the Prince of Wales for daring to defend Thomas Paine, hero of the American Revolution and author of "Common Sense" and the "Rights of Man."

Today, lawyers in various parts of the country who dare to defend clients representing minority views are suffering punishment which strikes at their professional lives and their freedom.

On September 28, 1949, trial lawyers in California defending the CIO Fishermen's Union against a government anti-trust action challenged the method of selection of the jury panel as being in violation of rules laid down by the Supreme Court. While the appellate court in part conceded the violation it, nevertheless, harshly and publicly censured the lawyers for having raised the challenge. One of the lawyers was Robert Kenny, a former Superior Court Judge and former Attorney General of California, another was Ben Margolis, outstanding Los Angeles labor and civil rights lawyer.

On October 14, five lawyers in New York, George W. Crockett, Jr., Richard Gladstein, Abraham J. Isserman, Louis McCabe and Harry Sacher were sentenced to from one to six months in jail for contempt. The wholesale contempt conviction with no opportunity accorded the lawyers for a hearing or for any defense whatever is unprecedented in American courts. The lawyers, all of whom have had wide experience in labor and civil rights cases, were representing the 11 Communist leaders.

Eight days later, on October 22, Vincent Hallinan, one of the most prominent trial lawyers in San Francisco, during the first week of his defense of Harry Bridges, trade union leader, was sentenced to six months in jail.

On December 16, O. John Rogge, former Assistant U. S. Attorney General, William Patterson and Emanuel Bloch, attorneys for six Trenton Negro youths charged with murder, were ejected from a New Jersey courtroom and barred from further representing their clients. The Judge had objected to Mr. Rogge's public statements on the case, his use of the phrase "travesty of justice" in the courtroom, and the fact that he had been retained as defense counsel in the first instance by the Civil Rights Congress rather than by the defendants themselves.

These individual cases appear to be part of an emerging national pattern; a pattern of political repression already clearly defined in the case of the teacher, the government employee, the writer, the scientist, the trade unionist, the Negro; a pattern of political repression which can destroy the lawyer's traditional freedom of advocacy and at the same time silence millions who need the lawyer to speak for them; a pattern which is the product of the public policy of certain Congressional Committees and individuals in our Government.

We are reminded of President Truman's recent assurance to the American people that the present hysteria against minorities would pass as did those dark days of the Alien and Sedition Laws when Liberty in the young Republic hung in the balance.

However, history tells us that democracy survived the earlier test because men spoke out plainly in its defense and that the hysteria of that day did not subside automatically.

If democracy is to win out today every American who is honestly interested in the welfare of the people must help in the struggle to preserve the Bill of Rights and with it the Sixth Amendment which guarantees to every citizen a fair trial and the "assistance of counsel for his defense."

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